SENATOR D'AMATO'S DASTARDLY DEEDS MARK GREEN

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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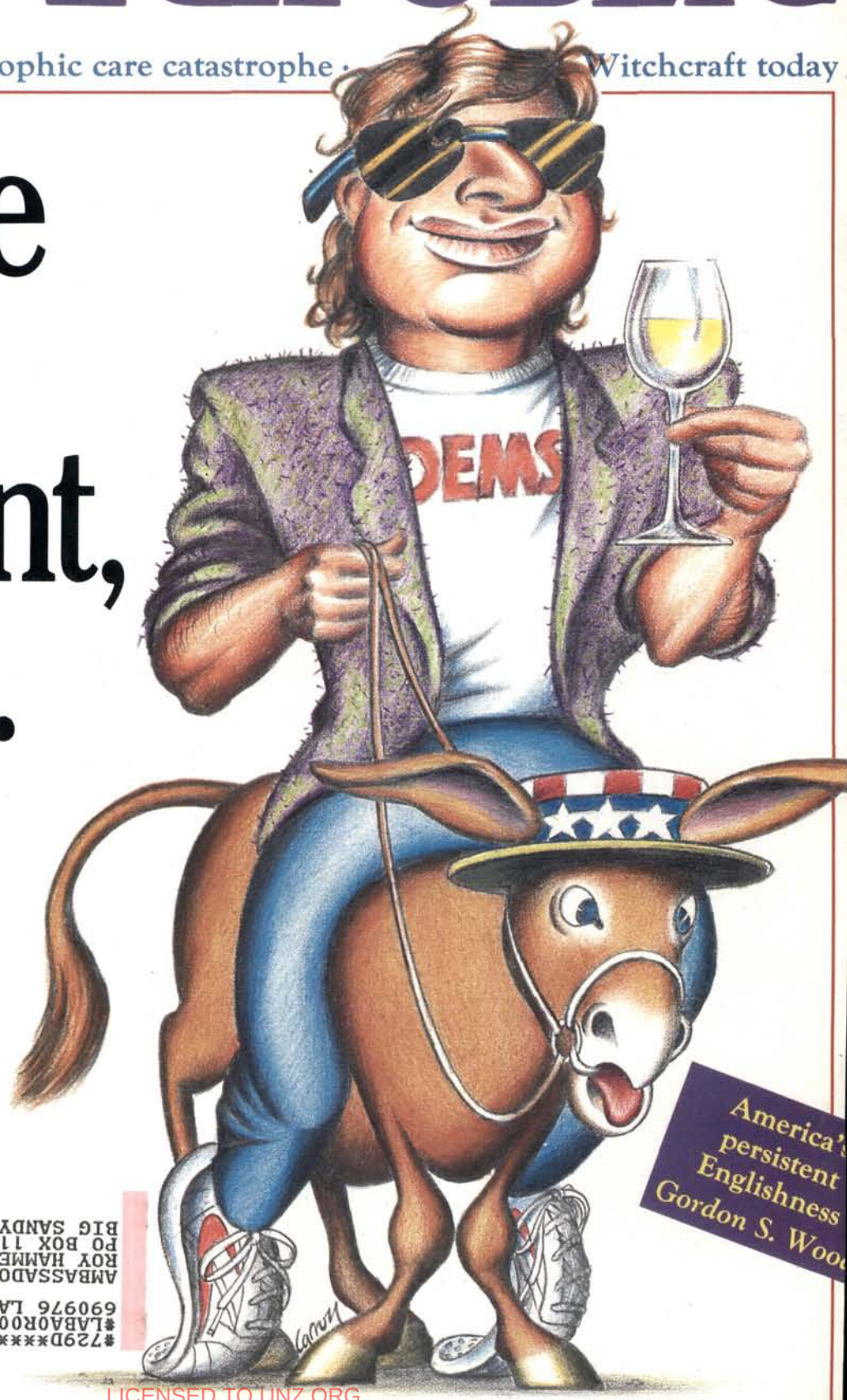
Advise and consent, babes.



With Hollywood in the saddle, the Democratic party rides into the sunset.

BY FRED BARNES

America's persistent Englishness
Gordon S. Wood

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CORRESPONDENCE

Statute of liberty

To the editors:

In "Knock Knock" (October 2), TNR suggests that the way to deal with the growing worldwide refugee problem is for Western nations to admit more refugees. In the interest of humanitarianism, perhaps we should. But even if we resettled all 14 million refugees, we still would not have addressed the problem, only its symptoms.

The explosion of refugees can be alleviated only by punishing or overthrowing the brutal regimes that create refugees. Citizens of countries with repressive governments have a responsibility to struggle for change within their native lands—even if it means some of them will be martyred along the way. And it is the moral obligation of the rest of the world to isolate offending regimes politically and economically, and punish any "civilized" government that maintains a business-as-usual policy with gross human rights violators.

The last thing we should do is to let offending regimes off the hook by resettling their domestic opposition in the United States. The experiences of two repressive Communist regimes tell us all we need to know: When Poland cracked down on Solidarity in 1981, jailing and even murdering some members, Solidarity leaders braved it out in Poland and kept their struggle alive. Today Solidarity is running the country. When Castro seized power in Cuba, his political opposition upped and left the country. Today they're a bunch of tired old men in Miami (still griping about Castro).

IRA MEHLMAN
Denver, Colorado

Accidental purist

To the editors:

The Washington Diarist's armchair reflections on the abortion debate are interesting in theory, as he decides that abortion in all cases should be banned ("Fetal Attraction," September 11). My thoughts from the front lines are slightly different. For ten years I've worked with at-risk children and their families. I've seen a 13-year-old girl and her family destroyed by an unwanted pregnancy. I've seen an 18-year-old mother of four devastated by an accidental pregnancy that ended with two children being removed from the home for abuse.

In an ideal world there would be no need for abortion. All women would have equal access to contraceptives and education. There would be no single mothers struggling to feed and clothe large families. I will continue to work toward these ends. In an imperfect world with imperfect solutions, the only choice is compromise. Though it remains fair and reasonable to restrict the availability of later-term abortions, women must have the option to choose safe and legal abortion in the early stages of their pregnancies.

JANE SEIDENBERG
Portland, Maine

To the editors:

The Washington Diarist would prefer to ban abortion in all instances. In the case of a life-threatening pregnancy, the right to life that the woman had as a fetus would then have been lost along the path to conception. What does the Diarist consider to have been her sin to earn such wages?

DONALD J. MONTGOMERY
Okemos, Michigan

Wish you were here

To the editors:

My compliments to James Atlas for delving into that genre of comparative self-aggrandizement: class notes ("The Kids Are Fine," September 4). I too read that section of my alumni magazine, but without the same verve. I sense that the editing process must be homogenizing any spark of self-deprecating wit or wry insight. To test this, I took advantage of my presence last year in Honduras, where I was doing nothing more daring than taking pictures of Mayan ruins. I sent a brief note, posted with appropriately exotic stamps, to our class correspondent. Strongly hinting I was in the employ of the *contras*, I claimed I would be returning to the United States to recuperate from injuries sustained in a helicopter "mishap." Several months later, the following appeared in *Boston College Magazine*: "John Gieco [sic] wrote of recent escapades in Central Amer. He may be back in the U.S. sooner than expected. Best of luck, John . . ."

JOHN J. GRECO
Washington, D.C.

Coming in from the cold

To the editors:

In his review of *The Russia House* ("The Little Drummer Boy," August 21), Sergei Petrov writes, "It never occurs to le Carré that if Soviet missiles are indeed inaccurate and unreliable, they are more dangerous, not less dangerous, to the West." (Le Carré's Soviet hero has smuggled out the information that Sovi-

continued on page 41

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

OCTOBER 30, 1989

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5 THE EDITORS **FIASCO IN PANAMA** Willie Horton, meet Manuel Noriega.

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TRB FROM WASHINGTON

Monetary democracy

The Federal Reserve Board is indefensible in theory and indispensable in practice. Twelve unelected people have their collective finger on the second most important button in America: the one that controls the money supply, the biggest controllable factor in the equation of our economy. Seven of the 12, the Federal Reserve governors, are appointed by the President to virtually uncurtailable 14-year terms. The other five, regional Federal Reserve bank presidents, are appointed by people appointed by the first seven. Their decisions are made in secret and kept secret for six weeks. Their budget is also secret. They probably affect your life more than the Supreme Court. How many of them can you even name?

At least the Supreme Court is in the Constitution. The Fed is merely a conceit of Congress, and wasn't fully vested with its current authority until 1935. Its mystical trappings are all quite recent. And the Court's seemingly undemocratic power has a clear basis in democratic theory: it protects individuals and minorities against the tyranny of the majority. The best that can be said of the Fed along those lines is that it protects the majority against itself—a dubious democratic safeguard.

The House of Representatives is about to hold hearings on two bills addressing the independence of the Federal Reserve. One, from Representative Stephen Neal of North Carolina, would order the Fed to reduce inflation from today's five percent to zero over the next five years. Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan actually supports this one, since it is toothless, and would give him useful rhetorical ammunition when politicians complain, as they always do, that the Fed is squeezing the economy too tight. (Monetary policy is a fiesta of mixed metaphors.)

The other bill, from Representatives Lee Hamilton of Indiana and Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, would give the Treasury Secretary a vote on the Fed's decision-making committee, would allow a new President to pick his own Fed chairman (instead of allowing the four-year Fed chairmanships to expire midterm), would require Fed monetary decisions to be revealed immediately, and would increase congressional supervision over the Fed's budget. Hamilton insists this is "not an attack on Federal Reserve independence" but merely an attempt to "establish a formal line of communication" between the Fed and the outside world. Dorgan is blunter. He says the purpose is "democratizing the Fed."

And why not? Why should such an important body be "independent" of democracy? Other major democracies don't let unelected officials make such important national policy. In an informational pamphlet about itself, the Fed answers the question by denying the premise that the Federal Reserve is independent. "[I]t is more accurate to characterize the System as 'independent within government,'" the Fed explains blandly. The pamphlet goes on to emphasize how often members have lunch with folks from the executive and legislative branches.

Gosh, surely we can do just a bit better than that. A better argument is that the Fed isn't really undemocratic. It's just democracy on a long fuse. The President does appoint the Fed's governors, and Congress can always change the rules if it wants to. The institutions of our representative democracy are all on fuses of various lengths, from the House elected every other year to the life-tenured Supreme Court interpreting a Constitution that itself is protected from short-term democratic storms but not long-term democratic tides. The Fed is in there somewhere between the Food and Drug Administration and the Circuit Court of Appeals.

Persuaded? I'm not, really. On the other hand, in the current state of American politics, no sane person would want it any other way. It was ten years ago this month that the Federal Reserve proved its worth, acting while the democratic branches of government were paralyzed to control inflation, then running at 14 percent. On October 6, 1979, Fed Chairman Paul Volcker announced that the Fed would "target" the money supply rather than interest rates. Like almost all pronouncements about monetary policy—from politicians as well as Fed chairmen—this was a question of political courage masked as a technical issue. Volcker was willing to put the country through high interest rates and a recession in order to conquer inflation.

It worked, at great cost. President Carter (who appointed Volcker) endorsed the Fed medicine and President Reagan—who had to reign over its most agonizing period—generally refrained from complaint. But it was surely a

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"The art world and the art market with the nonsense left out."
–MAHONRI S. YOUNG, American correspondent, Apollo

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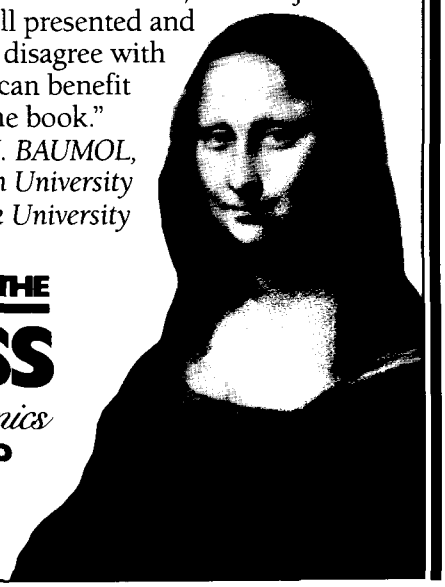

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 30, 1989

FIASCO IN PANAMA

Never mind Willie Horton. George Bush has let Manuel Noriega out on furlough.

The Panamanian fiasco, alas, is altogether in character. Bush has made ample use of his Presidency as a pulpit, but much of what emanates from it is more bull than bully. Whatever the subject—education, drugs, the environment, voluntary service—Bush is good for a speech and a Duke of Wellington-style site visit, but then the parade moves on. As befits a Texan who's really from Kennebunkport, he's all hat and no cattle.

In Panama, Bushtalk is getting people killed. For months he has been calling for Panamanians to oust Noriega. A brave civilian opposition tried it in May at the polls. The opposition won the election but was denied its victory by Noriega's goons, who thereby demonstrated conclusively that the general rules by force alone. The Administration bellows, but has yet to recognize the winners of the election as the legitimate government of Panama.

Similarly, Bush's calls for the Panamanian Defense Forces to stage a coup finally produced one, but the Administration was not prepared to finish what it had inspired—and now at least ten people are dead and Noriega is purging the PDF of anyone who might be disloyal and waving his machete at the United States.

If a President Dukakis had put on such a performance, it's easy to imagine the rage and contempt, the cries of gutlessness and betrayal, that would be coming from Republicans. But to be fair, many of the Democratic members of Congress now inveighing against Bush's handling of Panama would be delivering lectures about international law and gunboat diplomacy if Bush had ordered U.S. troops into combat, lost American lives, and perhaps failed to nab Noriega.

It is not true that the Administration has been doing nothing but talk against Noriega. Diplomatic, political, and economic pressure has been applied to isolate him internationally and stir opposition against him internally. The United States went to the Organization of American States, as Dukakis would have done, to rally the nations of the region. Unsurprisingly, OAS diplomacy has failed to budge Noriega; still, all the Latin nations except Cuba, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Ecuador have pulled their ambassadors out of Panama (as have Israel and Japan). The Administration helped the civilian opposition during the election, overtly and covertly, and sustains it now.

The Administration also has tightened economic sanctions, ensuring that no U.S. firms pay Panamanian taxes and blacklisting Noriega-connected Panamanian corporations from doing business here; it has denied visas to Noriega cronies who want to visit the United States; and, by way of "exercising U.S. rights under the Panama Canal treaties," it has increased the number and level of activity of U.S. troops on the scene. This isn't entirely saber-rattling: the incidence of beatings and harassment of Americans by Panamanian troops has fallen dramatically. The former commander of U.S. forces in Panama, Gen. Frederick Woerner, got fired for refusing to stand up to Noriega. His replacement, Gen. Maxwell Thurman, was on the job just two days when the abortive latest coup took place.

Our quarrel with Bush is this: having called for a coup and having made Noriega's ouster a primary goal of American foreign policy, his Administration wasn't ready when the moment of truth arrived. Supposedly, the Pentagon and the National Security Council constantly conduct war games to develop plans to put into effect when contingencies arise. World War III has been fought in the situation room a thousand times. But when this wished-for and not exactly unpredictable contingency arose, the Administration was without a plan.

The implications of this failure transcend little Panama. The whole map of Europe is changing before our

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eyes; is the Administration simply going to react when things happen? Suppose that tomorrow 50,000 young East Berliners start marching toward Checkpoint Charlie at the Berlin Wall and East German troops begin mowing them down. What do we do in that contingency? What do we do if West Germans want to cross the border to rescue their countrymen? And what are we planning to do to forestall such dangerous possibilities?

In one sense Bush was lucky in Panama. This was not an Armageddon-in-the-making crisis. He has been warned: his Administration plainly lacks the machinery to plan for and manage a dangerous situation. This ought to be the subject of the next National Security Council meeting and of some heavy "oversight" by Congressional intelligence and armed services committees.

The Administration's position is that it was unable to see through what it had inspired in Panama. Officials claim they weren't sure that Maj. Moises Giroldi, the coup's leader, wasn't pulling a trick when he made contact with U.S. intelligence. They say he refused to hand Noriega over to us and that he represented not a movement toward democracy but simply a reordering of power within the corrupt, authoritarian PDF. But what are the CIA and U.S. military intelligence good for if they can't penetrate an officer corps that's been trained and equipped by the United States for decades?

Instead of asking Giroldi if he would kindly hand over Noriega, why didn't we make it the condition for any U.S. assistance? Why didn't we say that our help was also conditional on his publicly promising to turn over power to the country's elected government? Instead, we blocked two roads at his request, letting him in effect dictate U.S. policy. We were half in, half out, and never in control. In the event, Giroldi misjudged the military situation and imagined he could talk Noriega into retirement—and paid for it with his life. Noriega is blaming us for plotting the coup, though we didn't do so; and our allies and adversaries must be wondering, not for the first time, whether the United States is serious about what it declares its policy to be.

If the President truly considers the Noriega regime such a threat to U.S. interests that he is willing to commit the prestige of the United States to its ouster, then he had better be prepared to follow through. When Giroldi staged his coup, Bush could have declared—as Ronald Reagan did at the time of Grenada—that a state of "violent uncertainty" existed and that it was necessary for American forces to surround the PNC command center and to control the air, lest violence spread and endanger U.S. civilians. It seems unlikely that the PDF, without a leader, would have dared resist the United States. Other Latin countries—despite ritual protests about U.S. intervention—probably would have been glad to see the United States delivering on its stated policies.

Now that this coup has failed, what do we do? Bush has three options: (*a*) to continue applying pressure and hoping that someone else in the PDF will rid us of Noriega—the strategy seemingly favored by Bush and most of his top advisers; (*b*) to intervene, overtly or covertly, to plan a coup or seize Noriega ourselves, and, if we can, set Panama on the road to democracy—the strategy favored by Administration hawks including Vice President Dan Quayle and White House chief of staff John Sununu, plus former Assistant Secretary of State Elliott Abrams; or (*c*) back off and adopt a long-term strategy of building up international pressure and strengthening the democratic opposition, in hopes that Panama will evolve into a civilian democracy—the strategy favored by Democratic doves, including Senator Christopher Dodd and Robert Pastor, President Carter's adviser on Latin American issues.

Of the three, we favor (*a*), the main Bush strategy—with two modifications: that Bush quit promising more than he will deliver, and that the United States explore the question of whether a plausible intervention plan can be concocted. The ideal intervention would not be staged by the United States alone, but would be led by Panamanians, backed by neighboring Latins, and aimed at a democratic outcome. There is no real precedent for this. The closest, a failure, occurred in 1979, when the Carter Administration helped destabilize Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza. A broad-gauged domestic opposition, including democrats and Communists, opposed Somoza, and other Latin countries intervened, in violation of all their protestations of non-interference. The revolution turned out badly—with a Leninist seizure of power—because Carter, having interfered, was not willing to intervene, and thus to ensure that democratic forces prevailed. We should not make that mistake again.

NOTEBOOK

BOSS RULE: The proprietors of journals of opinion work in strange and mysterious ways, as critics of this one have often had occasion to note. So here, for a change, is something for the toilers at the *Nation* to ponder: How come Arthur Carter, identified by the *New York Times* as "real estate, publishing" but better known to them as the owner of the magazine they work for, not only is supporting Republican Rudolph Giuliani's candidacy for Mayor of New York against Democrat David Dinkins but also has gone to the trouble of tapping his rich friends for a cool $21,000 in campaign contributions, thus earning for himself the distinction of being among the top 15 "bundlers" for the cause?

AN APOLOGY: THE NEW REPUBLIC owes Thomas L. Friedman, author of *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, an apology for an item printed in our Correspondence column in the October 16 issue. The editors of this journal are not responsible for the opinions of its readers, including those of Professor Jerold S. Auerbach of Wellesley, who charged in an overwrought letter that while Friedman "proclaims his love for Is-

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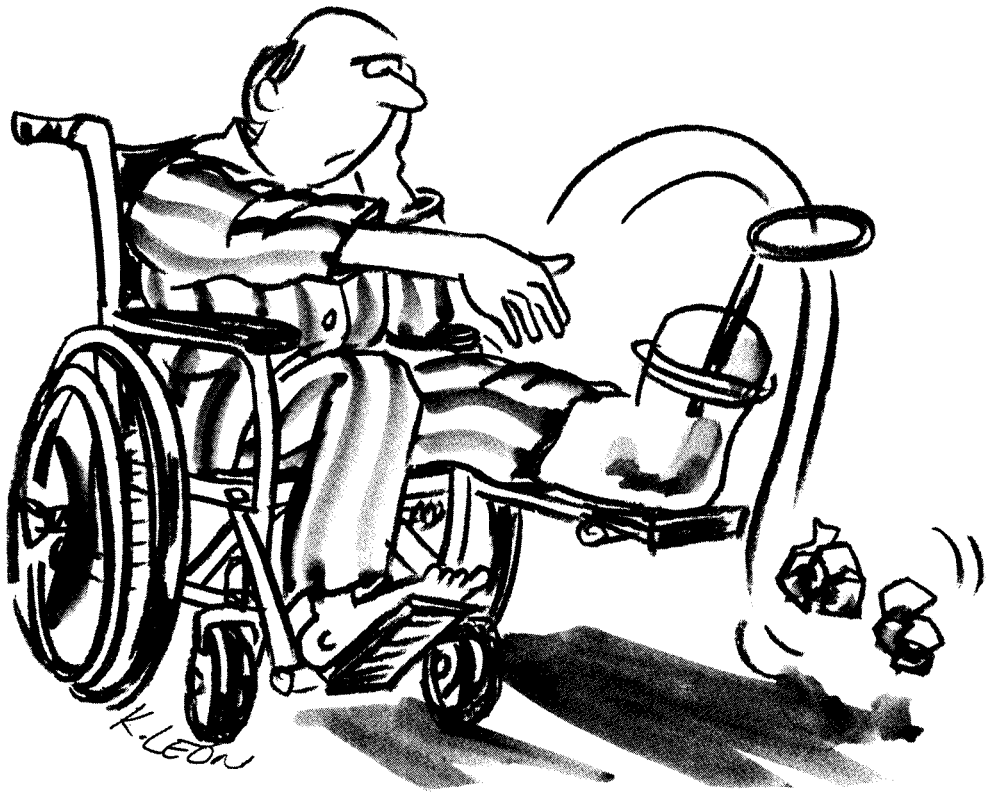
What would several months in this position do to your financial position?



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rael" he has ever since his undergraduate days been "an Arabist" whose love for Israel is "patently false." The letter, however, cites as documentary evidence a statement Friedman signed in 1974—and the character of the statement is distorted. Though critical of Israeli (and American Jewish) attitudes to the PLO, the statement was, in fact, passionate in its solidarity with the Jewish state; and it did not, as Auerbach alleged, favor the establishment of "a Palestinian state in the land of Israel." Given that Friedman's book is part autobiographical narrative, he might have said in the text that he had had qualms about Israeli policy as far back as 15 years ago. Even so, and the criticisms of the book published in these pages ("Field of Dreams" by Martin Peretz, September 4) notwithstanding, this is no proof whatever that he harbored an ideological bias against a state with which he remains so palpably enmeshed today. Foul play.

REVOLVING DOOR WATCH:

Panamian police arrest opposition leader

PANAMA CITY, Panama — Police arrested an opposition leader and eight supporters who were touring remote provinces urging people to join a boycott of the military-controlled government, a fellow opposition politician said.

Ricardo Arias Calderon, a former candidate for vice president, was arrested with the others on Sunday in Veraguas province, 180 miles west of Panama City, according to Guillermo Cochez, a fellow Christian Democraty Party leader.

Panamanian police release opposition leader

DIVISA, Panama — Opposition leader Ricardo Arias Calderon and eight companions were freed Monday after being held 20 hours and charged in connection with their efforts to curtail the government's funds.

Arias, a former vice presidential candidate, was arrested Sunday while in Veraguas province, 180 miles west of the capital, to promote the opposition campaign against the government controlled by Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega.

—*Knoxville News-Sentinel*, October 3
(thanks to Howard A. Simon, Knoxville, Tennessee)

The war on leaks.

SHHHHHH!

By Timothy Noah

On August 2 an obscure federal bureaucrat announced at a little-noticed congressional hearing that the U.S. government had made an important change in its policy toward the dissemination of information. The bureaucrat was John Keeney, Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department's criminal division. Keeney had been called before two subcommittees of the House Judiciary Committee to explain why federal investigators had been blabbing so much to the press. The Democratic chairmen of the two subcommittees, Don Edwards of California and Chuck Schumer of New York, were especially angry about anonymous leaks regarding powerful Democratic members of the House: Jim Wright, Tony Coelho, and William Gray. In a blunt letter to Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, Edwards and Schumer had accused Justice of "using leaks for political purposes against House Democrats," and demanded that Thornburgh "take clear and aggressive steps" to stop them.

It was a golden opportunity for Thornburgh. Since taking over the Justice Department, he has been so obsessive about keeping secrets from the press (laying off, for example, more than half of the department's press officials, and forbidding others to supply even routine information) that among reporters he is easily the most hated member of the Bush Administration. Thornburgh answered Edwards and Schumer by having Keeney tell their subcommittees that Justice would not merely track down leakers and fire them, but throw them in jail. Keeney said that Justice had taken a new look at an old theft statute and decided that unauthorized disclosure to the press of government information was a crime. Under the new policy, sources who share even unclassified government information with reporters—not by pilfering documents, mind you, but by photocopying, faxing, or verbally summarizing them—can be prosecuted as thieves and serve up to ten years in prison. If Thornburgh means business, this policy could become an administrative equivalent of Britain's repressive Official Secrets Act, a solution infinitely more harmful than any problems leaking might cause.

Congressional criticism of the sort that preceded the new policy on leakers is nothing new. Edwards, for example, has been sending outraged letters to Justice about loose-jawed federal prosecutors since 1985. Although Edwards's concern for the civil liberties of criminal suspects is laudable, his specific complaints about pretrial statements have tended to be fastidious. For example, he objected when Attorney General William French Smith announced the indictment of "the entire leadership of a major organized crime family." In a perfect world, such prejudicial thoughts would never be uttered, but in a perfect world there would also be no Mafia.

Complaints about prosecutorial indiscretion jumped several quantum levels of outrage last spring when suddenly the victims were members of Congress. Of special concern was a Justice Department leak to Rita Braver of CBS News concerning Gray, who was about to become the first black to enter the House leadership. Contrary to popular impression, Braver did *not* report that Gray was an FBI "target"; she said the FBI was looking into financial dealings "involving"

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Gray, and was careful to add that this could all be a setup. But in a subsequent report she did say that the FBI was trying to determine whether Gray "knew of or authorized any no-show employees in the House," which sounds a bit more accusatory. "I stand by the report that I made," Braver told me. "I don't feel that I was misled by my sources." Right or wrong, Braver ended up looking foolish when the Justice Department hurriedly announced that Gray was not the target of any investigation. Justice left unanswered the question of why the FBI had paid Gray two visits, but a subsequent article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* suggested that the FBI really wanted to know about an accountant who happened to have done some work for Gray. The source was (naturally) a leaker, in this case someone "close to Gray."

Gray may or may not have been the victim of a deliberate smear, but he certainly was the victim of a leak. Because he is so respected—not only for being an able legislator, but also for representing the aspirations of black Americans—the leak caused an unusual amount of anguish in political circles. Indeed, even the *New York Times* editorial board felt compelled to join in, blithely condemning this "abuse of the machinery of justice" (as if the reporters working in the newsroom several floors below didn't themselves depend on leaks). Did the Justice leak cause him lasting damage? Probably not. It certainly didn't keep him from becoming Majority Whip. But the outrage it created did give Thornburgh an opening to make leaking a crime.

Justice bases its new anti-leak policy on a statute that defines as a crook anyone who

> embezzles, steals, purloins, or knowingly converts to his use or the use of another, or without authority, sells, conveys, or disposes of any record, voucher, money, or thing of value of the United States or of any department or agency thereof, or any property made or being made under contract for the United States or of any department or agency thereof. . .

and so on. The phrase "converts to his use," which Justice has latched onto, sounds as though it could mean leaking, but it's really just common-law boilerplate for a certain kind of theft involving tangible property—say, riding your neighbor's horse without his permission. (Under copyright law there's boilerplate for theft of intangible property as well, but it's of no use in enforcing government secrecy because the government isn't allowed to own copyrights.) If "converts to his use" was never meant to apply to something as wispy as government information, can Thornburgh's anti-leak doctrine be struck down in court? It's worth a try. But in the past Justice has successfully used the statute to prosecute officials for giving information to someone other than a reporter—for example, leaking Drug Enforcement Agency information to a drug smuggler. So applying the same statute to press leaks may be legally permissible, even if it's a horrible idea.

It is not, strictly speaking, an entirely new idea, at least in the realm of national security. Before Justice formally embraced the new interpretation, federal prosecutors quietly used it to convict Samuel Loring Morison in 1985. Morison, a Navy employee and grandson of the naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison, had been caught passing photographs and information about Soviet ships to the British magazine *Jane's Defense Weekly*. Morison's was the first case in which the theft statute was successfully used to punish a government official for leaking to the press. As Philip Weiss pointed out last month in *Harper's*, important First Amendment questions went unexplored because Morison was a right-wing eccentric (his motive was to get Congress to spend more money on ships), and because he was at least partly in it for the money (he was a stringer for *Jane's* hoping to get a full-time job). Among those questions was whether Morison deserved to go to jail for photocopying and then describing the contents of a classified document to an editor at *Jane's*—something that surely happens at *Aviation Week* and the *Washington Post* several times a week.

Before Morison, the theft statute had been explicitly *rejected* for prosecuting press leaks under a policy established during the Carter administration and spelled out in every U.S. Attorneys' Manual since 1978. Use of the theft statute had earlier caused some controversy in the legal community when it had been attempted against Daniel Ellsberg (until a visit from White House plumbers to the office of Ellsberg's psychiatrist brought the Pentagon Papers trial to a halt). But the immediate inspiration for the 1978 language was something that appeared, appropriately enough, in a newspaper: a *New York Times* column by Anthony Lewis denouncing the theft statute's use in an espionage case. Lewis observed that the government-information-as-property theory could extend secrecy well beyond national security: "The price of food in the White House mess, the Amtrak deficit—any fact that leaked could be the subject of a criminal prosecution."

Now Thornburgh has proved Lewis's prediction correct by extending the doctrine to leaks of criminal investigations and beyond. It is already being applied in the ongoing investigation of the Gray leak, where officials reportedly have been subject to polygraph tests, though details are obviously not forthcoming from Justice. ("I'm not going to leak you information about a leak investigation," spokesman David Runkel told me.) Thornburgh has promised not to go after reporters who fence stolen information, but Justice reportedly considered subpoenaing Rita Braver's phone records until it found out that they were unlikely to help (the phone company keeps records only of long-distance calls, which at CBS are not traceable to individual reporters).

Why aren't more people outraged by the new secrecy doctrine? Gray doesn't choose to express an opinion, for reasons only he can know. (He wouldn't even leak them to me.) Schumer and Edwards have proposed that Thornburgh ditch the idea of prosecution and pursue a

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more sensible course involving firings or civil action, but they've gotten little attention, perhaps because their complaints helped create this problem in the first place. ("The Justice Department is taking advantage of the situation," Edwards told me.) The ACLU is concerned, but necessarily of two minds: on the one hand, it opposes the new policy as an infringement on the First Amendment, but on the other, it opposes the damage Justice Department leaks do to individual civil liberties. As for the press, it seems to be waiting for the first subpoena to be served on a reporter. But if Thornburgh is smart, he'll avoid reporters altogether and prosecute press leakers on the basis of other evidence. That way newspapers will make less of a fuss—and the effect on the free flow of information about the workings of government will be just as chilling.

TIMOTHY NOAH is a Washington reporter.

It's Taiwan's turn to play.

CHINA DEAL

By Lorna Hahn

A few weeks ago the United Nations General Assembly once again convened, with the Republic of China of Taiwan notably absent. Expelled from the U.N. and its affiliates in 1971, and replaced by the People's Republic of China, Taiwan remains excluded from major international bodies. The rationale for this policy—that either China or Taiwan, but not both, may represent the Chinese people—made some sense so long as both the Communist and Nationalist governments claimed to rule all of China and viewed each other as temporary obstructions. But now that each government has openly acknowledged the other's control over its turf, a China-only policy is no longer tenable.

There was little reason to object to the ostracization of Chiang Kai-shek's repressive regime, but Taiwan's recent steps toward democratization appear all the more admirable when contrasted with current trends on the mainland. And although there may have been reason to dismiss a poor and weak Taiwan while courting a strong and powerful PRC, Taiwan is now a nation of 20 million people with a per capita income of $6,200—over 20 times that of their mainland kinsmen. Taiwan's annual growth rate of eight percent and its foreign exchange reserves of $75 billion are second in the world only to Japan's. If some of Taiwan's resources could be channeled through the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, they could make a dent in the international debt problem and aid Third World development. If Taiwan were admitted to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—its application is pending—and the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), it would be more likely to rectify its trade surpluses, to which other nations have objected.

The international community has long accommodated both governments of two other divided countries, Germany and Korea. This is possible largely because neither Bonn nor Berlin, Seoul nor Pyongyang, has pressed claims to represent the entire country. China's two governments historically have been mutually intolerant, partly because of China's 5,000-year history as a single nation. Within the last two years, however, each side has recast the one-China ideal in ways that offer the other some measure of legitimacy. Mainland China, eager for Taiwanese financial and technical assistance, has proposed unification on the basis of "one China with two systems." This arrangement, similar to that made with Hong Kong, presumably would leave Taiwan's economic and political structures intact. Taiwan has refused on grounds that there would be no credible guarantee of autonomy (a concern recently exacerbated by the movement of mainland troops to the south). Last spring Taiwanese leaders suggested instead that Beijing accept the formula of "one China with two legitimate governments seeking reunification."

Tiananmen Square interrupted the Beijing-Taipei rapprochement, which had begun to include cultural exchanges and frequent visits by Taiwanese to the mainland. But paradoxically, the massacre has also produced fresh impetus for détente. Beijing is dismayed that pro-democracy protesters frequently point to Taiwan as a model for economic and political progress, and most of China's leaders would feel more secure if Taiwan were regarded not as an alternative but as a partner.

In some ways Taiwan has stoked this insecurity. It launched an international propaganda offensive against the recent repression and is offering visas, funds, and other aid to mainland students. It recently restricted investments in the mainland (which totaled $2.5 billion over the last two years), at a time when China is having trouble attracting foreign investors. Even so, Taiwan might welcome another round of rapprochement. It would like to let its chafing entrepreneurs resume mainland business and wouldn't mind reducing the threat of a mainland invasion and raising its international profile.

One formula is to admit Taiwan to international organizations as a part of China not currently represented. Thus delegations from China (Beijing) and China (Taipei) together would represent what both governments still consider one China. This would be an extension of the cooperation the two countries have displayed in the few international bodies to which they both belong, most notably the Asian Development Bank. Co-founded in 1966 by Taiwan, the ADB admit-

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ted Communist China in 1986. Although Taiwan was then forced to accept the label "Taipei, China," which it considers demeaning, its delegation has coexisted cordially with Beijing's.

One very populous country has long been represented in the U.N. by more than one government. Under a compromise struck at Yalta after Stalin demanded U.N. representation for each of the Soviet Union's republics, the U.S.S.R. is represented not only by itself, but also by Byelorussia and the Ukraine. If admitted to the U.N., Taiwan would not, of course, follow Beijing's orders the way Byelorussia and the Ukraine have followed Moscow's. But on much U.N. business, the two delegations would probably vote alike. And when they did not, this would hardly constitute a threat to the PRC's well-being or to world peace. In fact, such disagreements might even encourage Eastern European countries (and perhaps even Byelorussia and the Ukraine) to depart from Moscow's Party line—a prospect that many U.N. members, including Communist China and the United States, might welcome.

LORNA HAHN is executive director of the Association of Third World Affairs, Inc.

ON THE HILL

CAT SCAM

By Jacob Weisberg

A year and a bit ago, Congress passed a health care bill that looked like good news to almost everyone. Though the Medicare Catastrophic Coverage Act didn't tackle the biggest gaps in the provision of medical treatment, it seemed a lurch in the right direction. The first significant expansion of Medicare since 1965, "the Cat," as some called it, covered old people for extended hospitalization, doctor bills, and some nursing home stays, and even included a prescription drug benefit. This filled most of the potholes into which those without private "medigap" insurance policies tend to fall, and managed to do so without taxing the young or adding to the budget deficit. The beauty of the plan was that the elderly paid for the benefits themselves through a monthly fee and a progressive surtax. With the 28 million-member American Association of Retired Persons on board, the bill passed the House 328-72.

In early October Congress repealed its handiwork. Though the Senate later voted to keep some shreds of the plan (which may or may not survive the conference committee), a *Wall Street Journal* editorial accurately characterized the occasion as the first time that any social welfare program had been "zeroed out." Lawmakers who did the zeroing said they were following the will of their elder constituents who simply didn't like it. "I have never seen anything like the outcry, yes, across the country, from the elderly," said Representative Barbara Kennelly, one of 242 members whose minds changed so dramatically in the course of 16 months.

But like most of the others who voted to trash the bill, Kennelly mischaracterizes the hue and cry when she suggests it came from the elderly as a whole. In fact, the ruckus rose from a small, prosperous, and badly misinformed minority of old people: a core of greedy and not at all needy geezers who pretended to speak for a much larger pool of poor who stood to benefit. As in the capital gains fight, cowed House Democrats abdicated responsibility by accepting that the financial preferences of the wealthy, loudly expressed, constitute some inexorable political fate.

The Democrats panicked after witnessing a flood of five million cards, letters, petitions, and telegrams that piled up in the hallways of Capitol offices faster than their machines could respond. Their terror is understandable: a thousand letters might translate into many thousands of dollars and votes for an opponent in the next election. But in reacting to the quantity of mail, legislators were apparently oblivious to its quality. The sacks were loaded with preprinted messages and tear-away cards. Rather than the spontaneous outcry of concerned constituents, these heaps represented the manipulations of direct-mail barons, who have discovered just how lucrative the insecurities of the elderly can be.

In this case, the main engine behind the mailstorm is the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, a flyer factory owned by National Direct Marketing, which parades as a public interest group. Run by FDR's son James Roosevelt, the National Committee is famous on the Hill for its use of spurious crusades like the "notch babies" (retirees purportedly receiving less Social Security benefits than they deserve) to raise money in order to finance more direct mail (see "Geezer Sleaze" by Crocker Coulson, TNR, April 20, 1987). With the notch issue wearing a little thin, the National Committee chose to let the Cat out of the bag as a new source of profitable indignation, railing against it in letters and in its glossy newspaper *Saving Social Security*, which is sent to some 4.5 million members, who each pay ten dollars a year.

The group's most recent circular opens in typically hysterical fashion: 1989 INCOME TAXES FOR MILLIONS OF SENIORS WILL INCREASE BY UP TO $1,600.00 ($800.00 FOR SINGLES)—IT'S A TAX ON SENIORS-ONLY AND IT MUST BE STOPPED! Nowhere does the letter mention that only the wealthiest five percent of senior citizens—those with incomes higher than $50,000 a year—would owe the $800 maximum under the bill Congress passed. According to several Hill staffers, letters have poured in from recipients of Roosevelt's mailings who believe

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they owe the maximum surtax, but in fact belong to the 60 percent who would owe nothing. "The Jimmy Roosevelt people have raised scare-campaigning to an art form," says California Democrat Pete Stark, chairman of the Ways and Means health subcommittee, and one of the 66 members of the House who voted against repeal.

So effective was the National Committee's appeal that other direct-mail shops glommed on to its pitch. Although Roosevelt's organization is regarded as left-wing, Howard Phillips's ultraright Conservative Caucus used an almost identical approach in its mailings, which claimed that catastrophic coverage was not only unfair but "unconstitutional" (no explanation given). Like Roosevelt, Phillips implied that all would owe the $800 maximum regardless of income. Another mail room called Seniors Coalition Against the Tax sent out mock 1989 tax returns. As one House staff assistant put it, "The misinformation spread like wildfire." Seniors began to attack the AARP; when several thousand of its members resigned, the group was forced to back down from its original support for the Medicare expansion.

Most of the culpability for this fiasco belongs to Congress, which made a number of mistakes in preparing the bill. The first and most important was its failure to sell the program. Those who stood to gain should have been made aware of its benefits. The bill was "front-loaded," which means that taxes were collected before benefits began to be paid out. This bit of clever bookkeeping was supposed to generate a short-term surplus of $5 billion to help fudge Gramm-Rudman budget projections; it won the support of the Bush White House but ensured that the program had no chance to develop a wide constituency before it came under fire from those who didn't want to pay for it. If the benefits had started sooner, more of the elderly might have spoken up in its defense. "Any way you slice it the overwhelming majority of seniors were coming out ahead," says Ron Pollack of the Villers Foundation. "There was a silent majority that didn't understand the benefits because it hadn't received them yet."

Second, the maximum surtax should have been lower. At $800, it required wealthy old people to pay twice what Medigap policies now cost on the open market—offering them a Chevy at a Cadillac price. Though the program was not designed to help the people who would have to pay the most, it was bad politics to alienate those in the highest bracket with what seemed a punitive level of taxation. The Ways and Means Committee did consider halving the cap this summer, but by then it was already too late. Congress can avoid falling into similar traps the next time it tackles a social welfare issue—say, when it gets around to the issue of providing for long-term care. Unfortunately, the lesson that the House seems to be drawing is that there's no point in passing programs to help old people.

Among those who spoke against repeal in the floor debate was a cross chairman of the Ways and Means Committee who spent the summer unsuccessfully trying to work out a compromise that would salvage the bill. "I do not like how our collective image looks in the mirror," he told his colleagues. "While we have been elected to represent our constituents, that does not mean we should be cowed or intimidated by every special interest group that spreads misleading information." With its catastrophic flip-flop, the House has sunk so low that it requires lessons in adherence to principles from Dan Rostenkowski.

POSTCARD PHILIPPINES

HABEAS CORPSE

By Alan Berlow

LAOAG

A few days after the death of Ferdinand Marcos I was talking to Rolando "Mad Dog" Abadilla, the Vice Governor of Marcos's home province of Ilocos Norte, about his efforts to have the body of his longtime friend and mentor returned from Honolulu to the Philippines. Suddenly, Abadilla began to describe how the province's Governor had handcuffed and tortured several security guards because they had participated in a wild sex orgy with his wife. Furthermore, Abadilla said, the Governor had recently "accused me of having orgies with his wife." Although the connection between Marcos's corpse and the sex life of the Governor's wife was not immediately apparent, I eventually discerned that part of Abadilla's agenda was to exploit the raging controversy over the return of the Marcos remains in order to discredit the Governor, whom Abadilla is trying to have removed from office.

I headed for Ilocos Norte soon after Marcos's death because I wanted to see for myself how people in the heart of "Marcos Country" were taking the news. I quickly learned that the task of championing the ex-President's cause had fallen to a motley collection of eccentric politicians and religious cultists who have discovered the hand of the CIA in efforts to keep Marcos out, and the hand of God in efforts to bring him back.

Laoag, the capital of Ilocos Norte, is located at the far northwestern end of the Philippine archipelago, ten hours by car from Manila. As I drove into the city I passed the provincial capitol building, which the cuckolded Governor, Rodolfo Farinas, is expanding to include two castle-like gun turrets. He's afraid that Communist New People's Army guerrillas are out to kill him, so he has temporarily abandoned the enormous mansion he owns on the outskirts of town to take up residence in the better protected capitol.

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I booked a room at the Texicano Hotel, a few blocks down the road. The proprietor, Don Ranada, turned out to be the city's Vice Mayor and a practicing dentist. He briefed me on the local political scene, although he was a bit distracted by a live radio talk show that was taking calls from local citizens outraged that Ranada was planning a junket to a dentists' convention in Honolulu paid for with public funds. While I fended off Ranada's dog Hitler, who was trying to bite my hands and feet, he told me that Typhoon Openg, which had recently killed 30 people in the province, began on Marcos's birthday and that many people viewed it as an omen. He also noted that there had been an island-wide power failure the day Marcos died, and that "there was a very hard rain here" the same night. This last fact struck me as hardly astounding given that we are in the middle of the monsoon season, but Ranada went on to tell me that many Ilocanos believe Marcos had supernatural powers due to an "*anting-anting*," or amulet, that could, among other things, make him invisible. Ranada advised me that I was unlikely to find anyone in the province who opposed the return of Marcos's remains (which turned out to be true), and he agreed to put me in touch with several local politicians, among them "Mad Dog" Abadilla.

Abadilla is a jovial man with a deeply dimpled smile that seems to punctuate his every thought. A former chief of military intelligence under Marcos, he reportedly earned his nickname by torturing prisoners. His current campaign for the return of Marcos's body is, he said, a matter of national honor: "What we are fighting for are transcendental principles, respect for the constitution and respect for traditions." Abadilla intimated that President Corazon Aquino's refusal to allow the body to return could spell trouble. "Everyone has limits. It's just like a rubber band," he remarked with calculated portentousness. "If you stretch it too far, it breaks." As he said this he erupted into laughter.

Abadilla refused to explain exactly what he was getting at, but a lot of people take his veiled threats seriously, given the fact that he has been implicated in three attempts to overthrow Aquino and in the assassination of her husband. Elected to his current position while confined to a military stockade, he was assailed by Aquino after his victory as a "living repudiation of our ideals of decency and humanity." It is people like Abadilla that Aquino has in mind when she says the return of Marcos's corpse would be a threat to the nation's security.

As I talked with Abadilla in the home of Manuella Ablan, the 82-year-old widow of a well-known Marcos crony, I noticed the profusion of Marcos memorabilia, including photos of the deposed leader, his wife, Imelda, and their children. The pictures were taken in happier times, when the Philippines was a vast playground for a family that viewed itself as royalty. Among the photos was a portrait of daughter Irene, her husband, "Greggy," and their naked little boy, reclining in his mother's lap with his penis shielded by a shiny red apple.

Abadilla was going on at considerable length about what a great man Marcos was and how he'd left $26 billion to the Filipino people in his will (nobody else seems to know anything about this), and he was predicting that somewhere between four and five million people would soon descend on Manila to demand that Marcos's body be returned. He said he hoped a "miracle" would then bring down the Aquino government. The "only person" who opposed the return of the cadaver in all of Ilocos Norte, he said, was Governor Farinas, who had just left for Honolulu. Abadilla suggested that the Governor's "abnormal" behavior was due to his smoking excessive amounts of pot and *shabu* (a powerful form of crack). He then proposed that we move to Sarrat, the birthplace of the deceased President, to attend a mass. "So you can see how mature and peace-loving we are," he said, adding matter-of-factly: "We will all be better Christians."

The Santa Monica Church is located at the end of Marcos Avenue just past a large house the fallen strongman had built as a wedding present for his daughter Irene. After the Marcoses went into exile, the house was taken over by Seventh-day Adventists. The 18th-century church is a formidable brick building built by the Spaniards with a nave the size of a football field. Shortly after Irene's wedding, its roof collapsed in an earthquake, and the structure is now topped with sheets of galvanized iron supported by long tree poles that have become a roosting place for thousands of bats. In a brief memorial service Father James Bonowan described Marcos as "basically a religious and spiritual person." He said Marcos was "the most compassionate man the Philippines has ever produced." It was a Sunday, three days after Marcos died, and fewer than 50 family members, friends, and followers had turned out to pay their respects to the ousted autocrat in his hometown. It seemed an inauspicious start for a movement that hoped to rally five million people in Manila within the next few weeks.

As I left the church I was approached by a short, stocky man with long stringy hair who was wearing a black jacket and a bumper sticker that read "Bring Him Back." He introduced himself as "the country's only actor-comedian-loyalist." I told him I was in a bit of a hurry and wished him good luck.

I wanted to get to the nearby town of Batac, where Marcos had built two enormous mansions, one with an 18-hole golf course, as a provincial headquarters. Batac is a sleepy little town where the horse and buggy is still a means of transportation. For the past 14 months, its main attraction has been the corpse of Josefa Edralin Marcos, the mother of Ferdinand. Dona Josefa, as she is known, has been on public display at the Marcos Museum since shortly after her death in May 1988. The exiled Marcoses have insisted that she will not be buried until her son is allowed to return to the Philippines.

Just inside the foyer of the museum I was introduced

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to Cynthia Marcos Poblete Chan, an attractive young woman dressed in a black blouse, black pants, and dark sunglasses. A niece of the deposed dictator, Chan said she has been coming to the museum every day since Dona Josefa arrived. "I will feel sad when she is not around anymore," Chan said. "When she's around there is still hope that my uncle will come back."

The glass-covered coffin of Dona Josefa sits at the front of this room beneath a shiny bronze crucifix, surrounded by fresh orchids and wreaths of fake flowers, a bust of Marcos, and photographs of the one-time ruler, his mother, and Imelda. Below the coffin a carved glass pietà, backlit by a bright electric bulb, shines onto a handful of women who recite a monotonous liturgy for up to six hours a day, seeking the salvation of Dona Josefa's soul and the return of the former head of state.

Teresita Maglahus, who has been living beside the coffin for almost 500 days, explained: "Mama Rose received a message direct from God that President Marcos and Dona Josefa are not ordinary human beings." Maglahus is a member of a group called Alpha Omega, whose leader, Mama Rose, is also apparently no ordinary human. A close friend of Marcos's youngest sister, Mama Rose is said to perform miracles such as making barren women pregnant. Maglahus said her sister's brain cancer was also cured by Mama Rose. As Maglahus and company prayed, a funeral procession with a small brass band passed by outside and friends of the Marcos family and tourists in T-shirts and Bermuda shorts came and went. Some stopped to examine the remains of Dona Josefa. "Her hands have wrinkled but her face is like wax," marveled one visitor. Others took photos or made videos.

After examining the deceased, the tourists walked upstairs to a museum where they found 23 tarnished glass cases that house identical, life-size mannequins of Ferdinand Marcos dressed in some of his favorite shirts, as well as in his tennis clothes, all now turning gray with soot. Other glass cases contain collections of Marcos's golfing caps, pocket knives, and leather saddles. The museum, created by Marcos, is a curious self-portrait of a man who spent a considerable amount of time fabricating his past. There is a photograph of an old clock showing the hour of seven (Marcos's lucky number and supposedly the time he was born), a clay urn into which Marcos allegedly vomited after nearly drowning at the age of 12, license plates from Marcos's cars going back to 1950, a complete collection of his phony World War II medals, and copies of books he wrote—among them, *A Perspective on Human Rights and the Rule of Law* and *The Marcos Wit.*

Also on display is a photograph of a young, smiling Marcos dressed like a king, his head topped with a little crown. He is surrounded by a group of men dressed up as women. The picture was taken in 1954 at a local Batac festival called "Innocence Day." The museum's guide explained that Innocence Day is a festival at which people pretend to be someone they're not.

ALAN BERLOW is a free-lance journalist living in Manila.

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'Senator Shakedown' is all shook up.

AL'S PALS

By Mark Green

"What do you think of Al D'Amato?" I asked a focus groupie's dream, the talkative, Italian Republican from Queens driving my cab, about a month ago.

"A real sleaze, a low-life," the cabbie said.

I couldn't resist. "Oh? Who'd you vote for in his '86 Senate race?"

"D'Amato," he replied, without hesitation.

"But you just said he's a low-life."

"Yeah, but I didn't know it then. Now there's all the stories and scandals coming out."

"Do you remember who ran against him last time?"

Long pause. "Nobody important."

Ah, the oblivion of defeat. I'm the unimportant opponent who for three years complied with the unwritten rule in politics that losers don't say unkind things about winners. But after the avalanche of recent revelations about D'Amato's pay-to-play politics, I've concluded that vindication is no excuse for silence. So I've filed a complaint with the Senate Ethics Committee about D'Amato's misconduct—not because of my campaign but despite it. And I'm writing this article assuming that readers can discern the difference, as Telford Taylor once put it in another context, between motive and basis.

Is there a basis to Ralph Nader's comment that "D'Amato's corruption of office has given advanced meaning to sleaze"? As a local Long Island official in the 1970s, D'Amato helped run an unlawful system that forced civil servants to kick back one percent of their public salaries to the Republican Party machine. In 1979 a businessman later convicted of Abscam crimes was overheard on an FBI tape saying that D'Amato was "on the take," adding, "I've been contributing to these guys for 20 years. No big numbers. Five to ten grand . . . D'Amato may look to shake you down for a little more." As a Senator, D'Amato appeared as the sole character witness at the 1983 trial of Philip Basile, a nightclub owner convicted of working with organized crime to give a no-show job to an admitted drug dealer so he could make parole. (See "The Soul of a New Machine Politician" by Murray Waas, TNR, March 10, 1986.)

MARK GREEN is president of the Democracy Project and author of *Who Runs Congress?* (Dell).

Yet in 1986 D'Amato entered the campaign for re-election as an overwhelming favorite. Why? A brilliant deployment of incumbency. As chairman of the Senate Securities Subcommittee in his first term, he was able to squeeze immense sums out of Wall Street. ("If you didn't contribute," complained one business lobbyist, "they didn't return your phone calls.") He raised $13 million over six years, the second-largest amount in American history for a Senate incumbent. His war chest scared off prominent contenders and funded a barrage of TV ads that boosted his poll ratings. All this persuaded the media that he was a shoo-in, which became self-fulfilling when the major papers decided not to waste resources on extensive coverage of the race or of his past.

At worst, he was regarded as a charming rogue, if a trifle blunt. (In his 1980 campaign he had said, "I'll do anything short of killing Javits in order to win this nomination." Five years later, he hit up mourners at Jacob Javits's funeral for donations. He called people in public housing "animals." And he offered to be a character witness for Bernhard Goetz.) As for all the whiffs of corruption, there were not many officials, donors, or commentators eager to challenge a likely Senator for life.

Then, last June, the *New York Times* published a front-page story by Michael Winerip describing how a HUD program designed to subsidize low-income housing for minorities in Island Park, D'Amato's hometown, was rigged by D'Amato protégés to provide homes to, among others, a cousin of the Senator and the son of his staff aide. The piece created a public license finally to write that the Senator had no clothes, that he was more rogue than charming. It triggered a competition among the media to expose, not wink at, how Al's pals were using federal funds as their accounts payable.

Consider several recently revealed episodes, which render Al D'Amato as the 1980s equivalent of Boies Penrose, the turn-of-the-century Pennsylvania Senator who candidly described his philosophy to a group of business contributors: "I believe in a division of labor. You send us to Congress; we pass laws under . . . which you make money . . . and out of your profits you further contribute to our campaign funds to send us back again to pass more laws to enable you to make more money."

HUD. To date, the only Senator implicated in the

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mushrooming HUD scandal has been D'Amato. Here are just three examples out of several.

First, after being criticized for favoring his family with HUD-subsidized housing in Island Park, D'Amato complained, to the *Buffalo News* among others, that he wasn't even a Senator when the alleged fix occurred on November 19, 1981—even though he had been sworn in 11 months earlier.

Second, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, he persuaded HUD to provide 14 times more housing subsidies (per capita) for Puerto Rico than New York state in 1986-87. Several Puerto Rican developers close to D'Amato contributed $18,000 to him on the same February day in 1987, a month before he pushed for HUD grants to these same developers.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Third, in 1987 HUD awarded a $5.4 million low-interest loan for a partnership in Sackets Harbor, New York, headed by Michael Puntillo, whose friends had given $7,600 to D'Amato, and by Antonio Rodrigues, recently indicted for bribery and described by law enforcement authorities as controlled by the Genovese crime family. The law firm that handled all of the partnership's dealings with HUD—D'Amato, Forchelli, Libert, Schwartz, Mineo and Carlino—was founded and is run by D'Amato's younger brother, Armand. The Senator told *Newsday*, "You may find this hard to believe, but neither I nor any member of my staff ever wrote or requested these things." *Newsday* did find it hard to believe. The newspaper obtained logs of the HUD official in charge of these grants, which in fact document a series of calls by, and a meeting with, Senator D'Amato on the loan.

The New York regional administrator of HUD during this period (1981-88) was Joseph Monticciolo, a friend and protégé of D'Amato's. Before the House committee now investigating HUD, Monticciolo at first denied any knowledge of D'Amato pressure for grants. But then Alexander Naclerio, the former housing director at HUD, testified under oath that "Monticciolo always told me he cleared things with him [D'Amato]," and that Monticciolo even had a speed-dial button on his phone to ring up the Senator quickly and directly.

It's now clear that D'Amato used HUD as a personal slush fund to reward regularly his donors, cronies, and family.

Wedtech. Mario Moreno, a former Wedtech official whose testimony in March 1988 led to Representative Mario Biaggi's conviction, said under oath that Wedtech had contributed $30,000 illegally to D'Amato in the early '80s, a time when the Senator was, in Moreno's opinion, "one of the most important" figures helping Wedtech obtain lucrative Navy contracts.

Moreno added that D'Amato periodically made three staff members available to Wedtech, that Moreno met with D'Amato in his Senate office, and that he and a companion, Caridad Vasquez, received a "Dear Caridad and Mario" thank-you letter from the Senator. (The April 1986 letter said that without "your advice and generous support, my position going into this year's elections would be far different from what it is today.") Indeed, D'Amato bragged in a constituent mailing that he'd personally met with Navy Secretary John Lehman to help Wedtech get a $55 million contract for artificial harbors.

In court, Moreno denied that any bribery or extortion had occurred, but did acknowledge that "I felt we had violated the law" by making the contributions to Senator D'Amato. When asked why he gave to political organizations, Moreno answered, ". . . in exchange for favors we expected to get . . . We expected to have the Republican Party in our pocket."

No one has asked D'Amato under oath whether he was aware of Moreno's unlawful $30,000. But how likely is it that a criminal enterprise buying influence would illegally give $30,000 and *not* let the recipient know of its generosity?

Unisys. Unisys, a Long Island defense contractor that recently pled guilty to fraud in the Pentagate scandal, has worked energetically to infiltrate the D'Amato of-

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fice. According to an internal Unisys report originally leaked to *Newsday*, company executives were told to make thousands of dollars in illegal campaign contributions to D'Amato and Senator John Warner of Virginia, and at least five of the executives were told to falsify their expense accounts before getting reimbursed by the federal government. In all, employees from Unisys gave a total of at least $6,500 in campaign gifts to D'Amato. If employees falsely filed for expenses and got reimbursed by the Pentagon for them, then the federal government was inadvertently financing D'Amato's 1986 re-election campaign.

But Unisys went beyond unlawful gifts with its influence-buying. If hiring a Senator was a bit much, why not hire his brother to imitate the Senator? In August "NBC Nightly News" disclosed that D'Amato's brother Armand had drafted a letter on behalf of his client Unisys for the Senator to send to the Secretary of the Navy in order to procure a $100 million Navy contract for Unisys. The draft letter concluded with the Senator, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, saying he "would appreciate being advised of your plans in this regard." The letter was sent under Al D'Amato's signature without substantial revision in late 1987 (he denies any knowledge of the letter), and Unisys formally won the Aegis contract in April 1988. Al D'Amato's reaction? He criticized Unisys, not his brother.

Armand D'Amato's law firm is often the beneficiary of the Senator's actions or those of his allies. It handled business involving the Sackets Harbor HUD grant; a HUD grant for the construction firm Jobco, Inc., in Westchester; Basile's liquor license; and Monticciolo's business partnership after he left HUD. It also handled the closings for eight of the 44 HUD-subsidized homes in Island Park, which are now the subject of a HUD investigation.

Drexel Burnham. In September 1986 the *Wall Street Journal* ran a front-page feature headlined, "SENATOR D'AMATO WINS WALL STREET'S FAVOR—AND CONTRIBUTIONS." The story focused on the coincidental timing of campaign gifts from Drexel Burnham to D'Amato and D'Amato actions benefiting Drexel: "Last year, just one week before holding a hearing on a proposal to limit purchases of junk bonds by federally regulated thrift institutions, Senator D'Amato was guest of honor at a $1,000-a-plate dinner arranged by Drexel Burnham Lambert, Inc., the No. 1 underwriter of the high-yield, high-risk securities. The proposal, opposed by Drexel, was dropped from legislation that the Senator introduced."

Five days later, in December 1985, D'Amato received an additional $18,000 from Drexel executives. By the fall of 1986 he had received $70,750 from Drexel executives and the firm's political action committee. Although D'Amato had promised a bill to curb junk-financed corporate takeovers before July 4, 1985, according to the *Journal* report, it never happened. "It's not what Senator D'Amato does that counts," the paper quoted one lobbyist as saying. "It's what he doesn't do." A Democratic Senate staffer said, "[H]e did freeze people by promising a bill. He was really using his ability to control the [legislative] process to neutralize those who were anxious to move."

MTI. In April the New York *Daily News* disclosed that D'Amato helped obtain $78 million in federal funds for an experimental engine called the Stirling that was developed by a company headed by one of his top financial backers. The company is MTI, Mechanical Technology Inc., and the backer is its chairman, Harry Apkarian, D'Amato's chief fund-raiser in the Albany area. Apkarian told the *Daily News*, "I don't think it's stretching it that I could bring out $100,000 in one night" for D'Amato. Apkarian's affairs attracted 200 to 300 people each, including one that raised $17,725 in June 1988, one month before D'Amato got a final $1 million in funding for Apkarian out of the relevant Senate committee.

How close were D'Amato and MTI during this period? Bob Lawrence, MTI's main Washington lobbyist, occasionally worked out of D'Amato's office. "He was constantly boasting about his access to Senator D'Amato," says Jerry Brown, an Albany businessman and associate of Lawrence's. "He told me he was the one who'd gotten Alfonse and Sam [Representative Samuel S. Stratton of Albany] to put money for MTI back in the budget."

To date, D'Amato has received over $100,000 through Apkarian's efforts, MTI has received nearly $80 million through D'Amato's advocacy, and U.S. taxpayers have subsidized a dud of an engine that now exists in just two vehicles, a postal van and an Air Force pickup truck, whose Stirling engines cost $400,000 each to build.

Roosevelt Raceway. A number of people got together in 1984 to purchase the Roosevelt Raceway in Nassau County from a subsidiary of Gulf & Western for $51.5 million. The buyers put up $1,000 of their own money—and gave at least $6,800 to D'Amato's re-election campaign. They obtained $54 million in tax-free Industrial Development Agency (IDA) bonds from the town of Hempstead after D'Amato, the town's former presiding supervisor, led the effort to obtain a temporary exemption from the federal law prohibiting tax exemptions for bonds used to finance gambling facilities.

In its application to the IDA, the Roosevelt Raceway Associates made clear their commitment to "maintain with certainty the jobs of raceway personnel, tax revenues to the Town and the raceway itself." Yet in July 1988 the owners closed the Raceway, citing losses. The value of the land will increase tremendously if it is used for commercial development rather than a low-profit raceway. As a result, once the owners pay off the financing of the $54 million, individuals who put up $1,000 may walk away with $145 million in profit. Also benefiting, again, is brother Armand, whose firm represents the Raceway Associates.

Poor judgment or venality? State Senator Emmanuel Gold, who has investigated the deal, says, "I don't know

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whether Senator D'Amato was given all of the facts at the time [he proposed federal legislation]. If he wasn't, then maybe he should have been. If he was, then there are questions raised as to his participation."

Office rent. D'Amato pays the highest rent among all members of Congress for local office space, a fact that could be attributed to the value of Manhattan real estate. But the building he rents space in is managed by a firm whose officers include two longtime D'Amato donors and allies, businessman Jeffrey Feil and Nassau County Republican leader Martin Bernstein; and, according to the *Daily News*, Armand D'Amato has been their lawyer (talk about coincidences!). Based on the lower rent of other tenants in that building, taxpayers appear to be paying $52,200 annually over market value to the Senator's friends.

The seriousness of these charges has prompted D'Amato to respond with alternating claims of ignorance and influence—and ethnicity. On the one hand, he says he was shocked, *shocked* that his brother represented Unisys or appropriated his name, shocked that Wedtech officials used his name in a "boastful" manner, shocked that a HUD memo kept referring to certain grant applications from his contributors as "D'Amato's projects." This could be labeled the Igor defense, named for the Marty Feldman character in Mel Brooks's *Young Frankenstein* who responds to a visitor's sympathetic reference to his grotesque two-foot-high hump by saying testily, "What hump?"

Based on the ratio of denials to evidence, Al D'Amato is the Pete Rose of influence-peddling. HUD officials and phone logs repudiate his explanation of ignorance on HUD grants. Repeatedly, Alfonse's arm-twisting profits Armand's firm and clients. Twenty-eight of 45 applicants for Section 202 subsidized housing in New York included at least one major D'Amato contributor, a fact that one applicant succinctly explained to the *Times* as follows: "People in the housing industry all made it plain to us: The decisions on who was awarded Section 202 grants was strongly influenced by D'Amato's office, so we would be well served to seek his support."

On the other hand, D'Amato periodically argues that obviously he uses his influence on behalf of constituents. He told the *Buffalo News*, "I'll do anything for anybody. Am I supposed to say I can't make an inquiry on your behalf because you contributed to my campaign? That's ridiculous." But over a million firms do business in New York state, and the ones he happens to help the most (Wedtech, Unisys, Drexel, Sackets Harbor etc., etc.) invariably give him big bucks. (His record of helping companies run by Democrats or non-donating Republicans is unimpressive to the point of invisibility.) Many Senators push for general legislation that can benefit large donors—the capital gains cut, for example. What distinguishes D'Amato from his colleagues is how routinely he muscles federal agencies to award grants that enrich *specific* donors and buddies.

"Mind you, this isn't to be considered a quid pro quo."

DRAWING BY ED FISCHER; ©1989 THE NEW YORKER MAGAZINE, INC.

Finally, D'Amato tries to blame his woes on critics "who judge me by my name and my background." It is a measure of his desperation that he'd imply that, say, the *Times* and *Newsday* are anti-Italian. The issue here is ethics, not ethnicity.

After a career of slipping tackles, is D'Amato finally being thrown for a loss? The barrage of published charges has depressed his poll numbers. According to the Marist Institute, New York state's leading non-partisan pollster, D'Amato had a 63 percent favorable rating in September 1986; by September 1989 it had dropped to 42 percent. For the first time, even Republican insiders are acknowledging his political decline. "Al's going down in flames and it's a shame," said a Republican politician in New York City to the *Albany Times-Union*.

When D'Amato faces re-election in 1992, will these wounding articles, polls, and comments be seen as a momentary downward blip or as the beginning of the end? It depends on the press and prosecutors. Without a steady flow of articles, a shrewd incumbent can bank on public amnesia and change the subject. And it's not yet clear that any of the current investigations will actually get D'Amato under oath, or under indictment.

Ever since he went to Washington, D'Amato, as New York's Senator of the President's party, has in effect chosen New York's U.S. attorneys, who perhaps have not investigated their patron as vigorously as they might have. Now, however, the U.S. attorney for the area including Long Island, D'Amato ally Andrew Maloney,

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has recused himself from his office's investigation of the HUD-Island Park fiasco. At the same time, members of the House committee probing HUD are pressuring Attorney General Richard Thornburgh to select an independent counsel to investigate the entire HUD mess.

D'Amato's political survival will probably depend on the answers to some very practical questions. Will the Senator be criminally investigated by non-partisan prosecutors who owe him no allegiance? Will Joseph Monticciolo and Geraldine McGann (the town official being investigated in the Island Park episode), both facing possible criminal charges, be "flipped" to testify against D'Amato as part of a plea bargain? Will HUD Secretary Jack Kemp (who has promised to clean house at HUD but whose second in command, Alfred Delli-Bovi, is yet another D'Amato confidant) pull back the curtain on D'Amato as HUD's Wizard of Ooze—or refrain because the administration doesn't want to lose D'Amato's vote? And, finally, can a Congress that ethically scrutinizes Jim Wright, Tony Coelho, and Barney Frank demur when it's time to investigate a walking quid pro quo?

Activism under the stars.

FLIX MIX IN POLITIX

By Fred Barnes

HOLLYWOOD

One morning last May, Senator Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia showed up in Hollywood for a breakfast of the Show Coalition, a group of young (mostly under 40) liberals who work in the entertainment industry and are deadly serious about politics and public policy. The appearance should have been a breeze for Rockefeller. He's reliably liberal on most issues and a smooth enough talker.

He blew it. The grumbling started when he praised William Bennett, President Bush's drug czar and a less than universally loved figure among Hollywood liberals. Then, in response to a question from Danny Goldberg, a rock manager and record producer, he attacked "Miami Vice" for dwelling on drugs and sex. Showco members looked at each other and smiled knowingly. During the question period, several complained that Rockefeller's criticism could aid right-wingers eager to impose censorship.

After the breakfast, the Senator was quietly informed that Goldberg, a founder of Showco, is the manager of Don Johnson, star of "Miami Vice." Still, Rockefeller persisted. A few days later he was quoted in the *Hollywood Reporter* as having told a Florida audience: "I know Don Johnson, and he is scum. He's just a long-haired guy with good looks who makes a bundle selling sex, drugs, and violence on commercial television."

Rockefeller, who's running for re-election in 1990, is dead meat out here. Somebody forgot to tell him about the new politics of Hollywood. In the old days, prior to 1988, raising money in Hollywood was a snap for liberal Democrats. They only had to blow into town and appear fleetingly at a reception to collect scores of $1,000 checks. Prolonged give-and-take with Hollywood folks on national issues wasn't part of the drill. Liberals like Rockefeller didn't have to fret over what they should say. They could take the money and run.

It's not that easy anymore. Like a stripper who yearns to be an actress, Hollywood is desperate to be taken seriously as a political force. Political junkies in Hollywood want to mingle with politicians, ask them tough questions, suggest new policies, dispense advice on campaign strategy. They want to promote their issues du jour, currently the environment and choice on abortion.

The event that certified the arrival of Tinseltown's new political role was a fund-raiser for Democratic Senate candidates at Barbra Streisand's Malibu ranch in the fall of 1986. Margery Tabankin, the executive director of the Hollywood Women's Political Committee, says Streisand had been energized by the Chernobyl nuclear accident in the Soviet Union a few months earlier. "I've got to do more," Streisand told Tabankin. "I can't just talk with my friends and send checks." At the resulting fund-raiser, Streisand sang and guests ponied up $1.5 million. She also has a foundation that promotes her pet causes, civil liberties and the environment. In 1988 she hired Tabankin to run the foundation (Tabankin took over HWPC in 1989), but only after a 90-minute grilling, mostly on environmental issues. Streisand even asked what Tabankin knew about a shipment of plutonium to Japan. "I was stunned," she said. "This woman has got to read lots of newspapers."

Don Henley, a singer-songwriter formerly with the Eagles, is a committed left-liberal who holds events at his home on Mulholland Drive. At one he raised money for People for the American Way. Another was for Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. Henley was alarmed when

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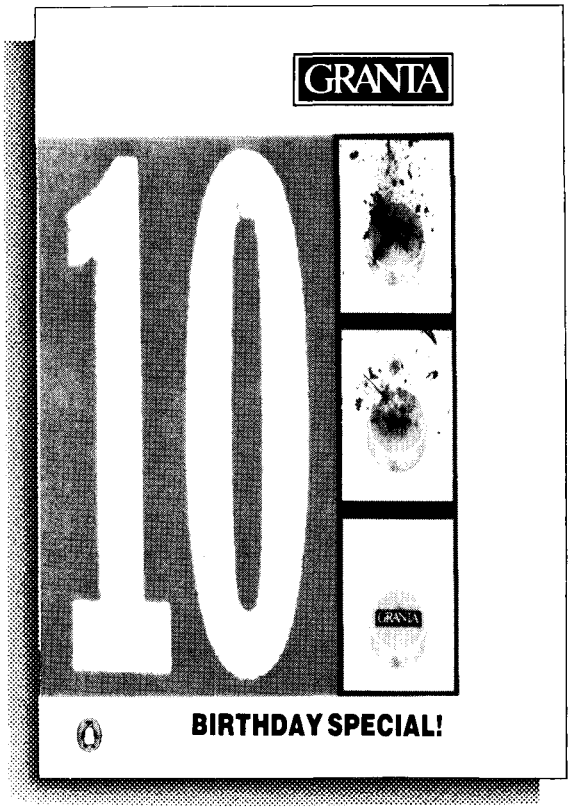

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Showco recruited Democratic Senators Al Gore of Tennessee and Tim Wirth of Colorado to conduct a day-long seminar last spring on the greenhouse effect. He sent a letter to Showco members, arguing that Gore's environmental record was spotty. Gore didn't ignore the attack. He responded that he'd missed votes while campaigning for president in 1988. At the seminar, Gore displayed what Hollywood admires most, performing skills. He took off his jacket, rolled up his sleeves, stood on a chair, and drew a chart. "He blew everyone away," said a Showco leader. "Wirth was dying."

Actor Richard Dreyfuss, who grew up in Beverly Hills and later starred in the movie *Down and Out in Beverly Hills*, is a Middle East buff and a dovish supporter of Israel. He's visited Israel, where he sought out Tom Friedman, the *New York Times* correspondent there from 1980 to 1988. He's talked to Mideast scholar Fouad Ajami. Dreyfuss has a full-time political adviser, Donna Bojarsky, whose duties include collecting ideas on how to revive the Middle East peace process. The project is called "Imagining the Peace: Alternative Futures for the Middle East."

Actress Morgan Fairchild, the blonde on the television show "Falcon Crest," has narrowed her personal political agenda to three issues: abortion, AIDS, and the environment. "She'll sit down and talk to you about AIDS research and its complications for an hour and a half," says Tabankin. She's counterpicketed Operation Rescue protests at abortion clinics, and she joined the pro-choice march in Washington in April. She was upset by an article in *Manhattan Inc.* that concentrated on her looks, her trouble with allergies, and her testiness about press coverage. In other words, she wasn't taken seriously enough. That hurts.

One way to be serious is to advise candidates directly. Warren Beatty, a friend of Gary Hart's since the 1972 McGovern campaign, pioneered this in Hollywood, though his advice wasn't always sound. He prodded Hart to give a 30-minute TV speech to spur his foundering presidential campaign in 1984. The speech flopped. In 1987 he was almost alone in urging Hart, post-Donna Rice, to get back in the presidential race. Hart did and sank like a stone. Hart also got advice from Mike Farrell, a star of the television series "M*A*S*H." Farrell has visited Nicaragua and looks kindly on the Sandinistas. Hart complained to friends that Farrell urged him to make pro-Sandinista statements.

There's nothing new about political activism in Hollywood per se. The New Deal and the "popular front" of the far left attracted entertainment figures in the 1930s and 1940s. Humphrey Bogart and Bette Davis campaigned for Adlai Stevenson in the 1950s. Many stars spoke out against the Vietnam War in the 1960s. The activism has usually been liberal (often left-liberal), if only because the entertainment industry—actresses, actors, producers, directors, writers—tends to be dominated by liberals. The few conservative activists are not ideologues like Farrell, Fairchild, etc. They show up at GOP events to help attract a crowd, not push a personal agenda. Actor Arnold Schwarzenegger appeared at a Bush rally in 1988 and is remembered for a single statement: "I only played the terminator," he said. "George Bush is the real terminator."

Two things are new. One is the organizations, run by politically experienced leaders, that have sprung up. HWPC, founded in 1985, acquired a measure of political stature when it hired a veteran organizer, Tabankin, as executive director last winter. She was once president of the National Student Association and ran VISTA in the Carter administration. The committee is invitation-only. It has 205 members—including Fairchild, Streisand, Ally Sheedy, Meredith Baxter Birney, Meg Ryan, and Jill Eikenberry—who pay $1,500 annually in dues. HWPC hired professional advance people to set up events for last April's pro-choice activities in Washington. (They flubbed by chartering a Continental plane. Since Continental is owned by union-buster Frank Lorenzo, the charter was canceled.) Now HWPC has created its own think tank, the Hollywood Policy Center, to push the pro-choice theme.

Showco grew out of the Hart campaign. Hart was the first presidential candidate to treat Hollywood as more than a money stop. He assigned Patricia Duff Medavoy, who'd worked on Capitol Hill and for political consultants Patrick Caddell and Bob Squier, to sign up Hollywood celebrities in 1984. She was wildly successful. Hart listened to his Hollywood supporters, and he had big plans to tap Hollywood in 1988. His campaign put together a media advisory group from the entertainment industry. It met for two days in March 1987, but its ideas on imagery and advertising were never used. In May 1987 Hart dropped out. "We knew we had the ability to shape the Hart campaign," laments Bojarsky, a Hart strategist and now Dreyfuss's guru. "He trusted the instincts of Hollywood and its ability to creatively approach issues. We could have had an impact there."

Instead, the Hart crowd—Medavoy, Bojarsky, Goldberg, John Emerson, Hart's deputy campaign manager and now deputy Los Angeles city attorney, and Betsy Kenny, TV producer Norman Lear's political aide—formed the Show Coalition (225 members, $300 annual dues). It's the Hollywood liberal group for baby boomers. It meets monthly to listen to and badger politicians like Jay Rockefeller. In May it sent 25 people to Washington for an issues seminar sponsored by Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut. They pressed Secretary of State James Baker about why he hadn't pursued détente with the Soviets more vigorously and asked about Bush's CIA ties. (Dodd, by the way, was best man at the wedding of Patricia Duff to Michael Medavoy, an Orion Pictures executive.) Showco "is going to become much more activist-oriented," says Patricia Medavoy. "People get empowered, they want to be involved, particularly stars."

The other thing that's new is the breathtaking self-importance of Hollywood as a political player. My impression is that Hollywood liberals believe Washington needs them, not vice versa. They think Washington is hopelessly compromised and will change only under great pressure (they're right about this). Many are sure

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they know more than elected officials, at least about their pet issues. Most of all, they're convinced the Democratic Party needs them. Democrats can't package their message in a way that appeals to the general public, but Hollywood can repair this "unique flaw," insists Goldberg. "We're in the communications business. We're a community that's pretty good at p.r. and hype."

There's a problem: Democrats aren't seeking Hollywood's help. No one except Hart has asked for advice, Goldberg says. His experience with the Dukakis campaign in 1988 was not encouraging. Goldberg and a friend hatched the idea of a country music concert for Dukakis, staged in Nashville. The aim was a cultural bond between Dukakis and the millions who like country music. Dukakis campaign officials "had absolutely total disinterest in this," says Goldberg. "They wouldn't even send [Lloyd] Bentsen."

Norman Lear tried, too. In early September he invited Dukakis to meet Hollywood people at his home in ritzy Brentwood. Don Johnson, Streisand, and Cher were among the 300 people who showed up. Since everyone knew a lot about Dukakis, Lear in his introduction said, "Governor, I want to tell you who we are. We try to appeal to the hearts and minds of the American public. So do you. I hope you will use us." Dukakis said he would, then didn't. Dukakis aides "would call you and desperately need your help, either for copy or to get celebrities," says Lear's aide Kenny. Lear, the producer of the TV megahit "All in the Family," offered ideas for TV spots. "Nothing would happen."

By the way, "when Norman thinks about political issues, he thinks about a commercial," Kenny says. He created the first commercials for People for the American Way, which he established in 1980 to combat the religious right. Now he's come up with one to advertise campaign finance reform. It would show a discouraged Senator talking about how raising money takes up all his time. I asked Kenny if Lear would use an incumbent Senator. Oh, no, she said, "he'd never get a real Senator to do it."

Lear believes in television as a vehicle for political and social indoctrination. His wife, Lyn, concocted a plan for slyly inserting environmental messages in TV shows. She and Lear set up a new outfit, the Environmental Media Association, to pursue this. Lear remembered that when Fonzie got a library card on "Happy Days," tens of thousands of young Americans did the same. And when the black male star on "Good Times" checked with a doctor for hypertension, so did thousands of blacks. Now Lear wants Bill Cosby to recycle his garbage. EMA officials have lobbied the cast of "thirtysomething," executives of MTM, and officials of the Creative Artists Agency, which represents dozens of Hollywood stars.

As Hollywood got more political, Washington political consultants began to move in. Patrick Caddell, who was Jimmy Carter's pollster and a top adviser to Hart and Senator Joe Biden of Delaware, now lives in Los Angeles. He dropped by a recent meeting of Hollywood liberals worried about the Democratic Party. Robert Shrum, the best speechwriter among Democrats, married a *Los Angeles Times* reporter and lives in LA. (His office is still in Washington, though.) Paul Maslin, half of the Democratic polling firm of Hickman & Maslin, has migrated to LA.

But the stars and moguls don't need them. They've hired their own personal political advisers. Lear brought Kenny, from PAW in Washington. She replaced Robert Burkett, who became the political guru for movie producer Ted Field (of the Marshall Field clan). Dreyfuss has Bojarsky, formerly an aide to Mayor Bradley. Marlene Savitsky, who used to work for HWPC, advises TV producer Gary David Goldberg ("Family Ties") on politics. Streisand has Tabankin.

"There's a network," says Kenny. "We all talk to each other every day." She includes in it John Emerson, Patricia Medavoy, and Stanley Sheinbaum, publisher of *New Perspectives Quarterly* and a longtime link between stars and liberal politicians. They are powerful, not in retooling American politics but in controlling access to a large chunk of Hollywood's liberal money. And that's what most politicians still want from Hollywood—money, not input. When Bob Kerrey, the Democratic candidate for Senate in Nebraska (and Debra Winger's former boyfriend), showed up in February 1988, he first had to go through Kenny. He passed her ideological test, and she introduced him around town. He came back twice more, raised more than $100,000, and won his Senate seat.

Hollywood is as much a money tree for Democrats as ever. Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey raised roughly $1 million at a fund-raiser on October 12. But I wouldn't call Hollywood a serious political force, not yet anyway. Entertainers are fickle. The issues that excite them are hot now, namely the environment and abortion. (In Hollywood the abortion issue is always referred to as "the choice issue," which has a nicer ring to it.) But those issues may melt away like the nuclear freeze of yore, and Hollywood may lose interest. Emerson, the former Hart adviser, says Hollywood doesn't have "an institutional presence in the halls of Congress the way, say, labor does. That is coming." Maybe.

Democrats ought to be wary. The notion that their party's problem, especially the inability to win the presidency, can be solved by Hollywood-style political packaging is dangerous. The culture of Hollywood is not quite the culture of America. A majority of Americans may share Hollywood's pro-choice position and anxiety over the environment. But on foreign policy and on social issues like pornography, Hollywood liberals are too leftist for most Americans. Any Democratic presidential candidate pulled in Hollywood's direction on these is asking for trouble. And just hanging around with Hollywood people can be politically fatal. Gary Hart met Donna Rice through his Hollywood chum, Don Henley. If he hadn't, he'd probably be president. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Two for the Seesaw

Claude Chabrol a veteran? Old Time is still a-flying. It seems only a blink of the (camera) eye since he was a member of the New Wave and also its quasi sponsor, encouraging Godard, Truffaut, and others. Chabrol is now 59, the maker of 42 films. Not all of them have been shown here, but the 41st is now with us.

Story of Women (MK2/New Yorker) is familiar Chabrol territory—blood, sex, and the law; and as usual, the focus is on the human beings who get into trouble rather than on the trouble as such. This is why, without any veil over his sanguine qualities, we rarely think of Chabrol as just one more sex-and-violence director. Like Simenon, his interest is in the components of the people whose lives swerve past accepted boundaries.

But a besetting worry in Chabrol's work, which keeps him from being in the first rank, is that he often misjudges the depth of the people on whom he spends his plentiful talents—the extent to which they are vicars for some secret elements in the rest of us. This was the problem with *Violette* (1978), the story of a murderer who was played by Isabelle Huppert almost glacially. The frigidity may have been intended as a commentary on the woman's numbing by society, but the effect was so extreme that she seemed more a remote clinical case than a salvageable human being. That effect is not so extreme in Chabrol's latest; still, it stays aloof.

Again it's about a woman played by Huppert. (It's the first time she has worked for him since *Violette*; maybe he saves her for arctic roles.) The setting of this story, based on fact, is a seaside town, the time is 1941 under the German occupation. Huppert is a poor woman whose husband is a POW in Germany and who does knitting to support her two small children and herself. Life is hard. As a favor, she performs an abortion on the woman next door—a douche, not surgery—a process she had heard about but has never done before. It works, and Huppert gets money.

She performs more abortions for more money. She meets a hooker whom she likes and allows the woman to rent a room of her apartment for business. Huppert's husband, François Cluzet, returns and is kept from knowing the source of his wife's income at the same time that he is denied marital access. She tells him she no longer loves him. Cluzet finds out about the sources of the income and also about a lover. Huppert's fate is in her husband's hands, and he squeezes.

This summary makes the film sound somewhat more exciting than it is. Its progress is a series of accidents—Huppert's discovery that her womanly folk knowledge can pay off, her casual meeting with the hooker—through which she moves like a blend of pawn and chess player. She has her moments of pleasure and rage, but few of them are connected with the changes in her life, which seem merely adventitious. If her story is meant to be an offering on the altar of existentialism, it's a damp sacrifice.

The tensile strength of the film should come from the context, from the fact that Huppert's crimes are committed in the midst of immense oppression. Her good friend, a Jewish woman, is deported by the Germans; the hooker tells her about "kraut" trade; one day she sees a man shot right in front of her in the street. We're meant to feel bitterness that Huppert is condemned for what she has done to help women and to support her children while huge horrors are being perpetrated around her. This is analogous to the much more successful irony in *Landru* (1962), Chabrol's excellent and neglected film about the Bluebeard who murdered rich women to support *his* family during World War I.

But the irony here falls flat. We don't feel it because we don't feel much of anything through the film. We simply see one event follow another. Chabrol has seemingly asked Huppert to emphasize the ice that is always latent in her acting, and the coldness doesn't distance her for irony, it just distances her.

Cluzet, who was the husband and father in *Chocolat*, is miscast here. There is no touch in him of the harried prole he is meant to be. Marie Trintignant (daughter of Jean-Louis) is slinky and warm as the hooker. Nils Tavernier (son of Bertrand) is only adequate

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Do the Right Thing. *Spike Lee's excellently made account of a quiet day on a black Brooklyn street and the violent evening that follows. Very troubling: but mostly in beneficial ways. (Reviewed 7/3/89)* **High Fidelity.** *A gem. Allan Miller's delightful, almost soul-healing documentary about the lives of the members of the Guarneri Quartet. It makes you feel good when you see it, and then you feel good whenever you think about it. (9/18&25/89)* **sex, lies, and video tape.** *Steven Soderbergh's delicate, merely metaphysical exploration of the ambience of sex surrounding four young people in Baton Rouge. A fine achievement. (9/4/89)* **When Harry Met Sally....** *Manhattan dating, highly amusing. Claims to investigate whether a man and a woman can be friends. But the old songs on the sound track and its chorus of older folks make it a comic contrast between the days of willing commitment and today. (8/21/89)* **—SK**

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as the lover.

The screenplay was written by Chabrol and Colo Tavernier O'Hogan (mother of Nils). It's well composed, and (to judge by subtitles) the dialogue has some bite. But Chabrol the director hasn't given the film much impact. He knows absolutely everything about making a film, but his basic conception here does little more than assemble all the factual and emotional data without making them burn.

Something else that hampers is the cinematography by Chabrol's longtime colleague, Jean Rabier. The colors are all too rich, as if this were a tristful French romance. A more subdued palette, evoking the imprisoned feeling of the French at the time, would have helped. If Rabier's full colors were meant as a sardonic touch against the blackness of reality, this irony, too, fails to register.

Still, some of us have long been reconciled to Chabrol's view of his artistic life: he wants to make as many films as he can—rather than fuss and fret over a few—knowing that some will be better than others. Fine. Now we can look forward to his next, made from Henry Miller's *Quiet Days in Clichy*, and can hope that the pendulum has swung.

Arthur Penn is a veteran, too, but with quite a different approach. He is now 67 and has made only 12 films. Presumably he fusses and frets about what he chooses to do, and (negatively proving Chabrol's point) he doesn't have a great deal to show for it. All through his career he has been a tease, showing talent, especially a lyric gift, or at least a lyric ambition—evident in *Bonnie and Clyde* and in his best film, *Little Big Man*. But his work has rarely lived up to the trappings of importance in which he dresses it.

Even Penn's warmest admirers, however, have rarely attributed one quality to his films: wit. In the theater he directed the comic *Two for the Seesaw* and one of the Mike Nichols-Elaine May evenings of satire. But his films have shown little of this temperament. It could even be argued that no one with a healthy humorous side could have directed such accumulated tedium as *Night Moves* and the films that followed.

Possibly in attempted balance, or attempted throwback to his theater days, Penn has now directed **Penn & Teller Get Killed** (Warner Bros.). The stars are two highly praised theater comics whom I had not seen. (Penn and A. Penn are, I assume, not related.) Nothing in this unmitigated debacle justifies the duo's renown. Penn talks a lot in a big beefy way, Teller is silent a lot in a way faintly reminiscent of Harry Langdon. They go through a series of (presumable) reprises of their burlesques of stage magicians, stitched to a story of consummate uninterest, developed from Penn's comment on TV that he'd enjoy a threat on his life. The film ends with a sequence intended to be black humor that leaves us embarrassed for all concerned.

Especially for A. Penn. Here and elsewhere, he deserved better than the treatment he himself has given his talents.

Robert Brustein on Theater

Orpheus Condescending

Tennessee Williams's **Orpheus Descending** was originally staged in 1957, 17 years after the failure in Boston of his first commercially produced play, *Battle of Angels*. With the exception of Eliot Norton, who saluted the young author's unusual talent, none of the Boston critics managed to recognize the sound of a new theatrical voice, and *Battle of Angels* abruptly closed, despite Williams's offer to make radical revisions. Williams, who did not take kindly to failure, stubbornly persisted in his desire to rewrite the play: *Orpheus Descending* was the belated result. Produced on Broadway under the direction of Harold Clurman, with Cliff Robertson and Maureen Stapleton in leading roles, the new play failed as well, though for different reasons. By this time Williams's work was being criticized less for unconventionality than for predictability. After a series of well-deserved triumphs, the playwright was beginning to repeat himself.

The major character alteration Williams made in the intervening years was to transform the heroine from a retiring Southern housewife (Miriam Hopkins in *Battle of Angels*) into a lusty Italian virago. The female lead in *Orpheus Descending* was written for Anna Magnani, who wouldn't commit to a stage run but later appeared with Marlon Brando in the film version, *The Fugitive Kind*. Williams kept the subplot involving the sensitive ex-gigolo, Val Xavier, and the neurotic aristocrat, Carol Cutrere (a kissing cousin of Blanche DuBois). And he preserved the melodramatic conflict between the bright angels of sexual freedom and the dark angels of Southern repression. But if, as Williams claimed, 75 percent of the writing was new, most of the additions were fat injections—bloated metaphors regarding the corruption of innocence by the forces of darkness.

These capsize the play. Instead of proceeding from the action, Williams's windy images seem like the burps of literary indigestion. Clearly, *Orpheus Descending* is more about mythmaking than playmaking. Whenever someone is poised to advance the (preposterous) plot, the character stops to describe the significance of snakeskin jackets or the purity of legless birds that never touch the earth. Val Xavier bears the name of two Catholic saints, and is confused by a female visionary with Jesus Christ. (The play takes place just before Easter with Val acting as a surrogate sacrificial object.) Yet this Lawrentian "fox in a chicken coop" is also endowed with the capacity to "burn down a woman," to run a temperature as high as a dog's, to hold his breath for three minutes, to stay awake for 48 hours, and to go a whole day without passing water.

In other words, emblems of Christian renunciation are continually colliding with images of macho muscle-flexing, and all are undermined by the mythological symbolism suggested in the title. In *Battle of Angels*, Val expressed his artistic inclinations by writing a book; in *Orpheus Descending*, he is a musician, toting a 12-string guitar signed by Leadbelly and other blues greats. The analogy with Orpheus's lyre is obvious enough, and Val's descent into the depths of Southern bigotry to redeem the benighted Lady Torrance is designed to mirror Orpheus's descent into Hell to rescue Eurydice.

Yet I suspect that Williams's fascination with the Orpheus myth was stimulated more by a Dionysian variant, described by Robert Graves, where this demigod is pursued by maenads for engaging in homosexual practices. (The maddened women tear him to pieces, then watch his severed head floating down a river singing beautiful songs.) Among the many false things about plays like *Orpheus Descending* is that Williams—like William Inge, and for similar reasons—was not prepared to reveal to a Broadway audience his real theme: the violent fate of the homoerotic artist in an intolerant patrilinear society.

The same kind of reticence marred such plays as *Sweet Bird of Youth* and *Cat on*

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a Hot Tin Roof—also Oedipal revenge stories weakened by fake phallic posturing and camouflaged references to sexual corruption. Williams's men and women may engage in passionate embraces, but the true heat of his plays is provided by the punishing father figure—Boss Finley or Big Daddy or Jabe Torrance—when he threatens the hero with real or symbolic castration. However melodramatically conceived, this character carries the weight of genuine threat; and it is not until Jabe Torrance lumbers down the stairs in the final scenes of *Orpheus Descending* that the play begins to develop some dramatic tension. It is the same tension described by Freud in *Moses and Monotheism* when he interprets the ritual of circumcision as the father's warning to the potentially incestuous son that if he makes a move on Mom, he'll chop off the rest.

This may explain why, despite the rampant sensuality in his work, Williams almost invariably associates eroticism with mutilation or death: his later plays are only comprehensible as disguised family romances. Williams's habit of pairing off sexually ravenous older women and sexually available young men (this combination appears in at least seven of his plays) may reflect his own unhappy experiences in the markets of rough trade, but it also suggests the courtship of a seductive mother and her mother-fixated son. Which may be why the vindictive Daddy is usually lurking in the wings brandishing his pruning shears.

Peter Hall dredges this unconscious theme to the surface in the final scene when he shows the hapless Val being led naked to his doom by a redneck Sheriff carrying a blow torch. It is one of many Expressionist interpolations in the English production he has restaged at the Neil Simon Theatre. *Orpheus Descending* is hardly a realistic play, but this Freudian nightmare is so supercharged it makes Elia Kazan look like a minimalist. The ominous opening moments are punctuated by pouring rain, barking dogs, and groaning music, as if credits were about to roll for *The Omen* or *The Entity*. Automobile headlights continually rake the windows of the Torrance General Store—is everyone in town using this street for U-turns?—while the electricals change so often you'd think Stanley Kowalski was upstairs getting the colored lights going with Stella. A coterie of prattling women deliver the tedious exposition directly to the audience; characters materialize from corners of the room; and a series of overloaded performances blow the fuses of an already overloaded play.

Vanessa Redgrave, I fear, is the biggest circuit breaker. I wasn't a fan of her Lady Torrance in London, where her accent seemed more Polish than Italian (now it's a combination of Polish, Swedish, and Irish), but by contrast with what she's doing on Broadway, her earlier acting was a model of decorum. There's no quiet in this woman, no sensuality, ultimately no truth; even the breathless radiance of her curtain call struck me as false. I suspect this restless, overwrought performance may be a form of compensation. Rather than swelling the ranks of great Williams heroines, as some have said, she's been seriously miscast. Lady Torrance is juicy, fleshly, curvilinear, passionate, a woman who acts from the groin and the soul; Redgrave is angular, dry, edgy, hoarse, hysterical, a woman who acts from her bones, muscles, and nerves. Redgrave is unafraid to take chances on stage or to look unattractive—in one scene she appears in a hair net, wearing no makeup. But even her risks seem ostentatious. She's always on, always exploding with anger; and the botched accent, rather than being a technical glitch in an otherwise fine performance, is a constant reminder that she's engaged less in a form of acting than a species of impersonation.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The supporting performances represent an unsuccessful effort to sustain a shape in this sandstorm. These are all competent American actors, but few are allowed to stand up to the star. An exception is Tammy Grimes as the Sheriff's goofy wife. Not an actress usually celebrated for restraint or understatement, she has some subtle and powerful moments, especially when, telling a story about holy water, she almost seems internally burned. Another is Marcia Lewis as a mean-spirited nurse. And Anne Twomey, as pasty-faced Carol Cutrere, looks like, though she lacks the power of, Picasso's *Repasseuse*.

But Brad Sullivan, an actor who usually plays weaklings, doesn't capture the brutal Oedipal menace of Jabe Torrance, and Kevin Anderson, though an attractive performer, lacks the experiential weight for Val Xavier. Anderson certainly has more sexual energy than his weak counterpart in London, but he's too innocent for the part, and there's simply no electricity flowing between him and Redgrave. Their relationship is all talk, and without sufficient pressure from a strong male actor, nothing can stop Redgrave from chewing the scenery.

As a result, this *Orpheus Descending* seems to me like a long, tedious circumnavigation of Williams's dream life, with a plot not far removed from gothic soap opera (a spin-off of "General Hospital" called "General Store"). Its endlessly

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reiterated theme could be compressed within a single sentence: "We are the fugitive kind, tainted with corruption but wild in the country, who want to live, live, live, and fly high above the earth like legless birds in our snakeskin jackets." If you can bear listening to this kind of boozy music for three hours, you'll like the show. But you must weigh my dyspeptic response against a critical reception that has been virtually unqualified in praise of the play, production, and leading actress. I didn't like *Batman* either.

Made in England

BY GORDON S. WOOD

Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America by David Hackett Fischer

(Oxford University Press, 944 pp., $39.95)

David Hackett Fischer's book could not be much bigger or more ambitious. It is the first in a series of volumes that he hopes will eventually constitute a cultural history of the United States. The project has been over 20 years in the making. It grew out of Fischer's response to what he calls in his preface "a revolution in the writing of history" that took place in the 1960s—the rise of "a new kind of history" modeled on the French *Annales* school. Unlike traditional history, this new history was not storytelling, but problem-solving. It was "not really about the past at all, but about change—with past and present in a mutual perspective."

It did not concentrate on great men and headline events, but on the acts and the thoughts of ordinary people. Its goal was "nothing less than an *histoire totale* of the human experience," and thus it drew upon every conceivable kind of evidence, from statistics to iconographic materials. These new social historians "presented their findings in a new way." Traditional historians had tended to offer their findings as "interpretations" discovered by intuition and supported by testimony. But the new social historians relied on argument using "rigorous methods of logic and empiricism." This new manner of presentation, says Fischer, represented an "epistemic revolution." It was not only "the most radical innovation of the new history" but also "the most difficult for older scholars to understand."

But, says Fischer, a professor of history at Brandeis, the great goal of the new history was not fulfilled in the 1960s and 1970s. Instead of bringing everything together, the new history disintegrated into bits and pieces, and into many special fields that became increasingly shrill and polemical. It could not accommodate the political events and the individual actions of the older history, and it tended to rely too much on materialist or modernization explanations. By the 1980s the new social history had lost touch with the larger purposes that had called it into being.

Fischer hopes that his project will offer a way out of the present historiographical confusion. He is, in other words, accepting what Bernard Bailyn called, in his 1981 presidential address to the American Historical Association, "the great challenge of modern historical scholarship"—to bring some coherence out of the incoherent mass of historical monographs and specialized studies that have been pouring from the presses in the past 30 years. Fischer expects to do this by bringing to bear on the chaos of historical scholarship the "organizing idea of cultural history," with culture defined in an anthropological sense. He sees his series finding "a way forward by combining several elements which the old and new histories have tended to keep apart." He would like his series to synthesize the best of the old narrative history and the new scientific history.

Fischer's project, therefore, will be about both elites and ordinary people, about individual choice and collective experience, about society and government. His volumes will combine the "epistemic assumptions" of the old histories and the new, blending interpretation and empiricism in a complicated "braided narrative." It will go beyond the "reductive materialist models" presently in fashion among English-speaking historians. And it will seek a new answer to the old problem about the relationship between past and present—avoiding the extremes of antiquarianism and presentism by using a third alternative, which Fischer calls the "immediatist" so-

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lution. Finally, Fischer hopes that his work not only will teach other disciplines the indispensability of historical knowledge, but will enlarge our ethical and moral horizons—in this first volume, for example, by discriminating historically among different kinds of liberty.

It is enough to take the breath away. Can any book or series of books do all this? There is certainly a touching earnestness, even naïveté, in the way Fischer describes his hopes and his plans. And there is exaggeration and distortion. The old history was never as unempirical and as free-floating as he argues, and the new history of the 1960s was not as revolutionary and path-breaking as he suggests. Solving problems and using logic and empirical data in historical study were not inventions of the *Annales* school or of the 1960s. Still, his perception that present historical scholarship is in confusion, if not in chaos, is widely shared by many in the historical profession. Thus his attempt to bring things together has to be applauded.

But breathtaking as the proposal for Fischer's series is, it is nothing compared with the particular interpretation of the origins of America set forth in this first volume. This book starts his series with a bang—a big bang. Fischer implies that nearly every major historian in the 20th century writing about the origins of early America has gotten it wrong. In fact, he believes that Herbert Baxter Adams and his followers in the 19th century were more right than not. Adams and his followers thought that American society can best be understood as an extension of Britain or Europe, that the basic determinants, the germs, of America lay in the Teutonic forests and Saxon institutions of the Old World.

It was against this 19th-century "germ theory," this view that the origins of American society could be found on the other side of the Atlantic, that Frederick Jackson Turner directed his writings of the 1890s and after, discovering in the western frontier of the New World the real source of democracy and free institutions in America. Although Turner's particular "frontier thesis" has long since been modified or discredited, the general assumption of his interpretation—that American society can best be understood as a response to the circumstances of the New World—has remained very much alive through the 20th century. It is not too much to say that most 20th-century American historians have been Turnerities in one form or another.

They certainly have not been followers of Adams or the "germ theory." Most historians of America have dismissed or ignored the continuities between Europe and America. Instead, like Turner, 20th-century historians such as Daniel Boorstin have highlighted the differences between the Old World and the New World, and underscored the peculiarities, and often the uniqueness, of American development. Even historians such as Oscar Handlin and Bernard Bailyn, who have written on immigration and have recognized connections between Europe and America, have nevertheless emphasized not the persistence of older European traditions, but the transforming impact of the American environment on those traditions.

Fischer's book directly confronts this 20th-century Turnerite dominance of early American history. The book argues, as Fischer says, "a modified 'germ thesis' about the importance for the United States of having been British in its cultural origins." The book is thus a revisionist blockbuster. It is timely, and its implications are portentous and immense.

During the period between the early 17th-century and the American Revolution, the British colonies were settled by at least four great waves of English-speaking immigrants. The first was an exodus of about 20,000 Puritans mostly from the eastern region of England to Massachusetts, in the period from 1629 to 1640. The second was the migration of a small group of royalist cavaliers and large numbers of indentured servants from the south of England to Virginia between the early 1640s and the 1670s. The third was the migration of 23,000 Quakers and Quaker sympathizers from the North Midlands of England to the Delaware Valley during the half century after 1675. The fourth was a massive flow of English-speaking peoples from the borders of northern Britain and northern Ireland to the Appalachian backcountry during the second and third quarters of the 18th century.

Although nearly all of these groups of migrants were alike in speaking English, in being Protestants, and in being jealous of their British liberties, they differed from one another in many ways—in their particular brands of Protestantism, in their social status, in their customs, in the British regions from whence they came. "They carried across the Atlantic," writes Fischer, "four different sets of British folkways which became the basis of regional cultures in the New World." By the eve of the Revolution, these four cultures were firmly established in America. The people of each group spoke different dialects of English, built their houses in different ways, cooked differently and ate different foods, treated the opposite sex and older people differently, raised and named their children differently, used time differently, and ordered their society and government differently.

These different British customs and practices have had decisive and long-lasting effects on American life. Although less than 20 percent of Americans today have any British ancestors, Fischer believes that "in a cultural sense most Americans are Albion's seed, no matter who their own forebears may have been." Strong echoes of these four British folkways, says Fischer, may still be heard today in the major dialects of American speech, in the regional peculiarities of American society, in the complex dynamics of American politics, and in the differing ideas of American liberty. The central thesis of his book, he writes, is the legacy of these four British folkways in early America, a legacy that "remains the most powerful determinant of a voluntary society in the United States today."

At the outset Fischer distinguishes two dozen or so different categories of folkways, which he tediously labels speech ways, building ways, family ways, marriage ways, sex ways, religious ways, learning ways, dress ways, work ways, power ways, freedom ways, and so on through the many other different ways cultures carry on the ordinary business of life. He has organized his book very neatly into four main parts, each dealing with one of the four waves of immigrants and the particular area in America it settled. In each part he describes in clear (if not elegant) prose the regional, social, and religious origins of the migrants, and then he goes through seriatim the various categories of folkways, depicting each in a half-dozen pages or so. In nearly every case Fischer's conclusion is the same: the origins of the particular custom or folkway he describes can be traced directly to the English or British region from whence the migrants came.

Thus the Puritans' practices of placing single men in families and sending out children to other households were not invented in America, but originated in the counties of East Anglia. So, too, were the food baking practices of East Anglia carried to New England by the Puritans, just as the special tastes for frying in the south and west of England and for boiling in the north of England were brought to the New World by the migrants from those regions. Even the fabled New England "town meeting" was not created in America: it was transplanted from East Anglia, where it had existed for many

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centuries before the great migration.

In a similar manner, Virginia's culture was decisively shaped by the long-existing English customs of its immigrants. Most of the 40,000 to 50,000 people who migrated to Virginia between 1645 and 1670 came from 16 counties in the south and west of England. This triangle of territory between Bristol, Warwick, and Kent, whose heart was Hardy's Wessex, had its own distinctive culture that went back a millennium or more. This regional culture was dominated by a small landowning class, which had a highly developed sense of honor and a hierarchical conception of liberty.

People from this region of England, argues Fischer, were royalist in their politics and Anglican in their faith, and were used to extreme inequalities in their society, to scattered rural living, and to the production of agricultural staples. During the early Middle Ages, slavery had existed on a huge scale throughout this area; in the eighth and ninth centuries the size of major slaveholdings had been as large as some plantations in the American South 1,000 years later; and this Wessex slavery had lasted longer than elsewhere in England.

Seventeenth-century migrants to Virginia from this region brought their culture with them, and this inherited Wessex culture—not the physical environment of the Chesapeake, not the character of tobacco production, and not the demand for labor—determined most of the patterns and habits of living in Virginia. Thus American black slavery, writes Fischer, in one of the most provocative of his pronouncements, "did not create the culture of the tidewater Virginia; that culture created slavery." Fischer, however, is leaving an extensive discussion of slavery to his second volume.

In page after page Fischer details the various ways in which the deeply rooted traditions and customs of the south and west of England shaped the culture of Virginia and other parts of the South—its dialect, its house plans, its eating habits, its extended patriarchal families, and its open hospitality. Historians, says Fischer, often have attributed the predatory sexual habits of Southern men to the presence of race slavery. But they are mistaken. Such predatory practices appeared in Virginia before slavery became widespread; more important, they had previously existed in rural southern and western England.

The people from the North Midlands of England who settled the Delaware Valley, including the colonies of West New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, likewise brought with them their peculiar customs and habits that decisively shaped the culture of the region. The Quaker architecture of the Delaware Valley, for example, was very different from the architecture in Massachusetts and Virginia, but it was very similar to the buildings in the north of England. The same was true of gender relations, marriage and inheritance patterns, customs of child-naming, child-rearing, and speech, and a number of other important folkways. Even the use of "thee" and "thou" as the standard second-person pronoun had been customary in the North Midlands of England long before it was taken up by the 17th-century Quakers. By 1760, though the Quakers had become a minority in the colonies they had founded, their egalitarian and pluralistic values, says Fischer, were deeply embedded in the culture of the Delaware Valley.

Fischer's final group of immigrants was the largest of all—perhaps a quarter million people whose migrations spanned a good portion of the 18th century. Many of these people came from territories that bordered the Irish Sea: the north of Ireland, the lowlands of Scotland, and the northern counties of England. They introduced into America still another variety of British culture. They were a stubborn and proud border people, seasoned by centuries of insecu-

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rity and disorder, suspicious of strangers and, like their famous progeny Andrew Jackson, quick to anger and fight. They brought with them to the Appalachian back settlements of America an intense xenophobia and "an indelible memory of oppression which shaped their political attitudes for generations to come."

Indeed, much of what came to characterize the southern highlands of America—from its clannishness to its instinct for personal violence—had its roots in the borderlands of northern Britain. Family feuds, distilled whiskey, leatherstocking pioneer dress, hell-fire preaching, religious camp meetings, born-again revivalism, an "elbow room" conception of liberty, and terms such as "hoosiers," "rednecks," and "crackers" were not invented by backcountry Americans. They were all transplanted from the border counties of northern Britain. All those historians who keep looking for indigenous and materialist explanations for the origins of these early American customs, says Fischer, have ignored the cultural roots of the original British migrants.

In a long 100-page conclusion, Fischer summarizes his argument and traces the remarkable staying power of these regional customs, which in many cases extend even into our own time. He wryly notes that the distinctive characters of these four folk cultures in early America are closer to their popular reputations than to the many academic "reinterpretations" of the 20th century. It turns out that the regional stereotypes are all essentially true (and we should have known this all along, or else they would not have become stereotypes). So the Puritans were in fact highly puritanical, and the Virginian leaders were cavaliers after all. If you want to know about Puritan and Yankee New England, Fischer implies, you cannot do better than to read Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Oldtown Folks*. The historical truth about the distinctiveness of these regional cultures, says Fischer, is finally emerging from "beneath the many layers of revisionist scholarship."

If this conclusion were not controversial enough, Fischer goes on to hop, skip, and jump through the rest of American history right up to the presidential election of 1988 in order to demonstrate the persistent influence of these four regional cultures in America. Thus the 17th-century Puritan system of nucleated central villages with small satellite hamlets has held on in New England for three centuries. So, too, have peculiar voting patterns, low rates of homicide, and high rates of public spending for government compared with other regions of the United States.

Southern violence is not the product of racial diversity or frontier conditions, and the lower levels of education in the Southern highlands cannot be attributed to the legacy of slavery or poverty. These customs are rooted in regional practices that go back to the borderland culture that British immigrants in the 18th century brought with them. In sum, there is not much in America that cannot be traced back to Albion's seed. The black "soul food" of the 20th century resembles the diet of 17th-century Virginians. Even the dour color of the ceremonial gown of the president of Brown University, "which," says Fischer, "is approximately the color of used coffee grounds," can be attributed to the Puritans' preference for "sadd colors."

In his zeal to demonstrate persistence and continuity, however, Fischer ultimately misses the point of history, which is to show not how things have remained the same through time, but how they have changed. Of course it is necessary to know that the vernacular architecture of the New England Puritans remained basically similar to that of East Anglia, but gross similarities and continuities are not what historians are really after. It's the differences, the discrepancies through time, however slight, however marginal, that intrigue and interest historians, for cumulatively they tell us how that different, distant past world evolved into our own.

In the architecture of 17th-century Massachusetts, as in all aspects of the regional cultures the British migrants brought with them to America, innovation and adaptation to new circumstances began at once and gradually modified what the migrants had known. Sometimes, as Fischer admits, the transplanted regional folkways changed quite dramatically and like the Anglican parish in the Delaware Valley were abolished overnight. Why people radically transformed some parts of their inherited culture and clung tenaciously to other parts is precisely what historians want to discover. Still, they cannot understand the nuances of adaptation and change until they know what came before. And to that knowledge Fischer has made an invaluable contribution.

It is not just the predilections of historians that Fischer is implicitly challenging in this book. He also takes on the immigrant myth of America, the belief that American culture is a blending and melting of many different immigrant cultures. According to Fischer, the 19th- and 20th-century immigrants to America "did not assimilate American culture in general." Instead, "they tended to adopt the folkways of the regions in which they settled." But Fischer never satisfactorily explains why they should have done so, never adequately explains why these original British regional folkways should have had such powerful effects on subsequent non-British immigrants, especially since the argument of his book rests on his belief in the staying power of people's particular cultures. Apparently he thinks that the British regional cultures were so deeply seated and so effectively institutionalized in the colonial period that non-British immigrants over the past 200 years have felt compelled to adapt to them. So that becoming an American for most immigrants has usually meant becoming a regional variant of an Anglo-American. Indeed, Fischer at one point refers to the 19th- and 20th-century United States as "Anglo-America."

Since we have long since learned that history books are as much a product of the present as the past, does the appearance of this remarkable book suggest anything about ourselves at this moment

The Marriage of Edgar and Cordelia

After Edgar drove the wolves from England,
their vows were spoken in the age of reason.
Years later, she confessed to having played
the fool because she wouldn't leave her father
to a family of wolves. In the age of reason

the specialist in laws of cause and effect
has proved that every family's agony
begins again when children fall in love.
My family gathers on the lawn, admiring
the moon. My father is the first to howl.

Howl, howl, howl, said her father. Her body
in his arms performed its act of silence.
He held a mirror to her lips and found
her breath on a feather. Then he drove himself
from England, beyond the age of reason.

I write this with a feather on your mirror:
we think that by a mute and naked act
we understand the wolves, but now we must
perform without taking off our clothes,
recite forbidden words until we're done.

Look: our families gather on the lawn.

WILLIAM WADSWORTH

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in American history—when the promotion of pluralism and the resistance to assimilation are being publicly voiced more vehemently than ever before, and when the idea of the United States being "Anglo-America" seems increasingly absurd? As Fischer points out, as late as 1900 nearly 60 percent of Americans were still of British stock. By 1980 that proportion had fallen below 20 percent.

In subsequent decades, as that proportion becomes more and more insignificant, will there be any great cultural consequences? Will the British seed that Fischer has so elaborately described eventually lose its potency? If people hold on to their cultures as tenaciously as Fischer says they do, and if the future Americans of the 21st century, the majority of whom will likely be of Hispanic, Asian, and African heritage, continue to believe and behave much as their ancestors believed and behaved, then is it not possible that the continuities that Fischer has seen in American history from its 17th-century beginning with Albion's seed may at last come to an end? Fischer never explicitly raises such a possibility. But why Albion's seed should continue to remain so strong in competition with the cultural seeds of other more numerous peoples is a question that his very provocative book leaves hanging in the air.

GORDON S. WOOD is professor of history at Brown University and is completing a book on the radicalism of the American Revolution.

The Witch Next Door

BY MARY LEFKOWITZ

Persuasions of the Witch's Craft by T. N. Luhrmann

(Harvard University Press, 382 pp., $25)

Like the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*, the witches of popular imagination are hideous and sinister. They scour the land for refuse to throw in their caldrons; they mix poison so they can predict murder and death for their enemies. Their powers to destroy make them as fascinating as they are horrifying. More tourists come to Salem, Massachusetts, to see witch relics and to shop in witchcraft boutiques than to visit the Maritime Museum's treasures brought from all over the world by the merchant sailors who gave the city its reason for existence.

The truth is that whenever real witches are discovered, they turn out to be ordinary people, like you and me, *almost*. An illustration in Holinshed's *Chronicles* of 1577 shows the Weird Sisters not as Shakespeare described them, but as three rather serious-minded women in respectable Elizabethan dress. In antiquity, he or she might be the greengrocer next door, who would compose a curse that could be scratched into the dark, yielding surface of a lead tablet; this inscription, thrown into a graveyard, or buried with you, could cause your lover to abandon his new mistress. The witch would know how to turn ordinary language into an incantation, repetitive and complete: "Rufa Publica: her hands, teeth, eyes, arms, belly, tits, chest, bones, marrow, belly, legs, mouth, feet, forehead, nails, fingers, belly, navel, cunt, womb, groin; I curse Rufa Publica on these tablets."

So it is not altogether surprising to learn that the witches practicing in London today are white, middle-class, and well-educated, and that they, like that author of the curse against Rufa Publica, believe that their incantations and rituals work. Thanks to the research of a young American anthropologist who wrote her Cambridge doctorate about them, we can learn about their world, possibly in more detail than we might wish. Unlike Margaret Mead, who was prevented by her ignorance of the Samoan language and culture from learning much more about adolescent girls than they were willing (however untruthfully) to tell her, T. N. Luhrmann comes from a society with values and problems similar to that of her subjects and speaks their language. Also, unlike Mead, Luhrmann was prepared to immerse herself in their culture, not as a critic or an observer, but as a participant.

Unfortunately, the story of her Adventures Under Ground—perhaps understandably, given the nature of everyday witches—is considerably less fascinating than Alice's. Reading about the various covens and mysteries made me eager to return to the Catalogue of Whales in *Moby Dick*. Perhaps foreign travelers like Alice or Ishmael, or even the Ancient Mariner, can make their tales exciting to hear because they remain outsiders. Since they are neither social scientists, moreover, nor modern Americans, they can observe, react, reflect, and regret without feeling called upon to pronounce or admire. Luhrmann, by contrast, believes that she needs to interpret everything, and wherever possible to sympathize. She presents her findings in the form of simplified theories and abstractions: "individual psychology and culture interact like oblique mirrors . . ." or, "taking magic seriously involves granting an importance to a complex set of imaginative fantasies." At the end of the third part of her study, she reveals, exactly as one might in a lecture to undergraduates, that "magic is about controlling the uncontrollable world."

In Luhrmann's defense, it must be admitted that the White Rabbit and the Mad Hatter are more amusing subjects than London's respectable witches. Despite her attempts to make them seem sensational or interesting, these modern pagans emerge from her study as, at best, mildly eccentric. They spend most of their time in the real world, holding down their jobs. Witchcraft provides them not with a vocation but with a social life, with a sympathetic encounter group, with stimulating reading that requires no examinations and demands little discipline.

In practice, they are hardly more adventurous than Episcopalians. Their prayers follow outlines that had become established by the early centuries, listing (as if to cover all bases) the names of gods from the various cultures known to them, whether Egyptian, Greek, or Hebrew. Witches today, with an equally vague eclecticism, add Mesopotamian and Celtic gods, and include references to the world of Malory's *Arthur*, Tolkien, Freud, and Jung. As in the past, witches' invocations of these polyglot divinities are usually accompanied by utterances without specific meaning, composed primarily of repeated throat vowels: "allalala allalala santalala talala" (an ancient Greek magic papyrus from Egypt), "mah mah o mah mah ae ee ae ee o mah mah" ("Sumerian" chant from a modern prayer to the Moon Mother). The English witches consciously derive their rituals from ancient patterns, real or imaginary, which they glean from modern manuals, and from studies of ancient magic like Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. These gleanings blur the distinctions between past and present, real and imaginary, familiar and unfamiliar. According to one manual quoted by Luhrmann, "Alice, indeed, might be said to

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be a modern version of Persephone."

Again, like the ancients, and perhaps disappointingly, the London witches ask for personal happiness and deliverance more often than they ask for the destruction of their enemies. Despite public fears about Satanism, sexual indulgences, and cat sacrifice, Luhrmann found her subjects to be relatively straight-laced and white-magical. When, in a magic spell, they "slay" an enemy, it is only to let him be born again (not in Jesus, of course, but in Isis, or with Inanna). If these modern witches take pains to keep their rituals secrets, it is not because their practices are illegal or immoral, but because they prefer not to appear ridiculous. As Luhrmann observes, you will feel less foolish invoking Hecate in your living room if you light candles, burn incense, wear ceremonial robes, and enlist the friendly support of several like-minded friends.

What, then, is the special appeal of witchcraft for these well-meaning men and women? It is, in part, that ritual provides an opportunity to involve oneself with the "other," whatever one perceives that other to be. Thus, certain rites invert the normal values of male and female symbolism: a woman inserts a sword into a vessel held by a man. Thus, contemplating a circle allows a librarian who feels persecuted by his books to "experience" without intellectualizing. Luhrmann also suspects that the romance and the fascination of myth are another major attraction.

In many cases there is also the desire directly to confront primitive emotions such as anger and fear: "There are the heights; there are depths; there is the human meditation which gains its power through coming to terms with both. Perhaps they are the projection of helplessness and its perceived source; one element in magic's appeal is that it gives power to those who feel frustrated." Witches, she concludes, believe in the spiritual, identify with others (or their past selves, especially as children), think that language has power, and believe that through ritual they can have access to another world.

So far she could be talking about a good deal of religion (or psychiatry). What makes witchcraft different? In her attempt to account for the survival of witchcraft in modern society, Luhrmann might have been better advised to contemplate literature and history than to rely almost exclusively on theoretical explanations. If she had looked more closely at the witches of the past, she might have seen that her gentler, caring, coeducational witches bear only a superficial resemblance to the sinister "cunning men and wise women" who were thought to be in league with, or even inhabited by, the Devil. Modern witches are "into" therapy and discussion groups. Their witchcraft gives the feminists among them the opportunity to worship the fire goddess Sekmet, who will help them "handle" anger. It allows its adepts to express their interpretations to understandably bewildered apprentices: "functionally, for practical purposes, there's no difference between inside and outside. Read a decent book on particle physics. It's a question of viewpoint."

The modern forms of rituals like astrology offer access to a system of meaning that unifies otherwise separate events, and grant a feeling of power to the helpless, but they also provide, more concretely, a ready means of coping with the isolation of modern urban life. If nothing else, they bring to the individual witch a sense of belonging, to the community of other witches and to fictional worlds with easily recognizable meanings and pleasantly exotic sensations. Witchcraft enables you to see yourself as a hero visiting the underworld or voyaging around the undiscovered world; you can contemplate the past without extensive research or tramps through museums.

And, without too much suspension of disbelief or expense or intellectual effort, you can escape from yourself, by acquiring the "archaic smile" of a participant in the Eleusinian mysteries. Luhrmann reports that, after participating in the "Ritual of the Catechism of the Grail," she was startled and delighted to discover that her watch had stopped. Of course, she had bought it in a street stall. Still, could it have been arrested by the white power of cabalistic force? She also relates how sometime later, during a ritual of Bast, the Egyptian cat-goddess, "when I rose to take my throne amid the chanting, I felt feline."

Luhrmann might also have emphasized how different today's well-dressed and socially acceptable witches seem from the bearded ones whom Macbeth and Banquo must seek out on their desolate heath, or from the lonely, peevish old women in 18th-century England who were ostracized by their villages. Modern witches, by contrast, must strive to escape from a society that tolerates and even encourages diversity. They seem, if anything, to want to regain a simpler, almost pastoral, existence, a life that is open, rustic, and prehistoric. No wonder that they prefer to work in the nude, that the rough, masculine shepherd-god Pan is often central to their rites. Although they clearly mean to carry on venerable traditions, they are reluctant to use the destructive curses and spells practiced by their predecessors. Like joggers, hikers, and high-fiber dieters, the witches' self-conscious fascination with the elemental and natural marks them as products not of the remote past, but of the last three decades of this perplexing century.

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The Lion of Illiberalism

BY STEPHEN HOLMES

Joseph de Maistre: An Intellectual Militant by Richard A. Lebrun

(McGill-Queen's University Press, 380 pp., $37.95)

Analyzing the revolutionary wars, Joseph de Maistre stated bluntly that Robespierre had rescued France from the brink of disaster, had prevented its dismemberment by foreign armies. Of those who died during the Terror, he disturbingly added, none were innocent. The "moral degradation" of the 18th-century nobility was a principal cause of the Revolution. French nobles had only themselves to blame for their misfortunes. Louis XVI himself had granted civil liberties to Protestants. So the guillotine's victims reaped what they had sown. And not only were the 1790s cruel and catastrophic; they were also "interesting" in a queerly aesthetic sense.

These are not the standard counter-revolutionary claims. They are not echoed by most conservative pamphleteers. But they do reflect the startling unconventionality of Maistre's mind. Describing the scaffold as a kind of altar, he displayed an eerily pious attitude toward the death penalty; and his sanctification of execution sometimes extended, shockingly enough, to the death penalty

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inflicted on the king. A profound fatalism, moreover, made it impossible for him to protest in an ordinary sense against the Revolution. Mankind deserves to suffer. God has every reason to unleash a cosmic Reign of Terror. From a wider perspective, it turns out, Jacobinism is but a pin prick.

Richard Lebrun has produced a careful and informative biography of the most fascinating figure in the history of the European right. What emerges from his story is that Maistre, who died in 1821, had an interesting mind but a tedious life. We learn the piquant detail that he dreamed vaguely, but repeatedly, of having his father's body stuffed to keep it near him. But the most important revelation is that Maistre personally welcomed the Revolution. It gave him a chance to escape from the drudgery of his life as a provincial magistrate. He relished the chance to struggle with evil on the world stage, to pose as a knight of the faith, locked in a last-ditch battle to save civilization from its enemies. Such posturing assuaged his boredom, however incompletely.

Maistre's idiosyncrasies colored and enlivened his underlying antiliberalism. Lebrun scours private diaries, letters, and early works to unearth any trace of liberalism in Maistre's thought. He produces some interesting evidence; Maistre occasionally wrote sympathetically of moderate monarchy, ruling in accord with custom, hemmed in by the power of hereditary magistrates, and amenable to mild reform. It was a vision more or less akin to Montesquieu's. But his most famous works, written in response to the Revolution, such as *Considerations on France* and *The Soirées of St. Petersburg*, are not so disappointingly bland. On a wide range of issues, he was an unwavering antiliberal. He even defended the Spanish Inquisition. He claimed to despise freedom of speech; and tolerance he considered to be political suicide, a regime's sickly refusal to attack its attackers. Public deliberation is wholly sterile. If a government is criticized, even slightly, it will utterly collapse. And the postulate of civic equality is utterly incompatible with any form of stable rule: "There can be no government if those who are ruled consider themselves the equals of those who rule."

But Maistre was little preoccupied with the details of institutional arrangements. He emphasized, instead, a fundamental, almost metaphysical, argument against liberalism, an argument that remains obstinately fashionable even today. Liberal theory (and, therefore, liberal institutions) are founded, he maintained, on a

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descriptively inaccurate theory of the person. Liberals assume that individuals, before entering into social relations, can identify and understand their own needs, and can subsequently negotiate mutually satisfactory contracts to ensure the satisfaction of these needs. But the socially uninfluenced individual, Maistre insisted, does not exist.

Social relations are not secondary and optional, they are primary and necessary. As a result, "The social contract is a chimera." You cannot think your way behind society to man's natural state for the simple reason that "society is coeval with man." Or to put it another way, "For mankind there has never been a time prior to society because, before the formation of political societies, man was not yet man." As the Aristotelian platitude would have it, "isolated man" is an unnatural perversion, for man is a social animal.

Only a fanatical liberal could deny this patent truth. How could asocial atoms deliberate collectively and decide to enter into relations of mutual restraint and civilized cooperation? What language, for a start, would they speak? Deliberation presupposes language, and language cannot exist without society. Liberal fairy tales about consent and an original contract should be discarded and replaced by a tough-minded, realistic, empirical, and anthropologically sound approach to human behavior.

But Maistre's harmless-sounding assertion that man, by nature, lives in society is not wholly empirical. The reference to "nature," for example, means that society is where God intends human beings to live: "It was God who made man sociable." God's command is what gives universal sociality its morally binding force. Indeed, Maistre views sociality theologically, less as a universal fact than as a universal norm. The deviations from that norm, the dissolution of "social bonds" that he observed around him, resulted, he thought, from man's disobedience to God's will. The 18th-century slackening of social bonds resulted principally from the philosophical "war to the death" waged against religion.

Maistre himself often lapses into a crudely instrumental view of faith. Religion, he says, is the "cement" of society. Secular philosophy, by contrast, is not only "the greatest scourge of the universe" but also, more pertinently, "the universal solvent." The rot began with the Reformation. Protestantism encouraged pride to revolt against authority. Dismayingly enough, obedience was replaced by discussion. Philosophy continued along the same path. It, too, "corroded the cement that unites people." As a result, "there are no longer any moral communities." Reason can destroy a community, but only religion can create one. (This asymmetry helped Maistre to reconcile the seemingly inconsistent claims that reason is both impotent and pernicious.) As the political expression of Enlightenment doubt, the Revolution was "an anti-religious and anti-social insurrection" or, more pointedly, "a rebellion against God." It was the logical consequence of "the horrifying project of extinguishing both Christianity and sovereignty in Europe." Divorce man from divinity, bring religion into question, and the public spirit expires. Doubt looses atomism upon society, and isolation, and selfishness.

What disconcerts Maistre is less the decay of authoritarian political institutions than the erosion of religion. Secularization is the crisis in the West. Unbelief is what makes the 18th century one of the most shameful and unhappy periods of human history. True, Maistre seems proud that providence has reserved the greatest achievements in physical sciences to Christian nations; and he thinks that natural science can serve as a safety valve, keeping intellectuals amused and distracted from politics. But science is like fire; it is only useful if it is carefully contained. In general, the scientific mind is swollen with pride and irrationally attached to a dogmatic faith in doubt. The only reason scientists talk about physical "laws" is to prevent people from praying. The explanation of natural events by reference to atoms and molecules degrades and soils the human spirit. Science leaves human beings morally unhinged. (Maistre attacks astronomy and defends astrology in this light.)

Modern philosophy, too, is indicted for the Terror. Locke's ideas, reproduced in the Parisian pressure cooker, unleashed "the revolutionary monster who has devoured Europe." Here we confront a quite picturesque version of what came to be called, in our century, the "dialectic of Enlightenment." When reason is overextended, it somersaults into unreason. By eroding religion, the philosophes destroyed taboos that had always kept society's "scoundrels and wretches" under control. The Encyclopedists are therefore guiltier than the brutes who actually manned the killing machines. Enlightenment thinkers talk about civilization and reason, but what they produce is barbarism and irrationality. The Terror was an expression of "learned barbarism," an almost unprecedented development.

Maistre cast himself as an anti-Voltaire, in a dramatic showdown between religion and philosophisme. The local skirmishes of his time had cosmic connotations. The world itself is an eternal battle. "If there is anything obvious for man, it is the existence of two opposed forces that struggle ceaselessly in the universe." This melodramatic and Manichaean view reflects Maistre's early involvement with the white freemasons; from them, as Lebrun shows, Maistre borrowed his idea of a secret knowledge that can save mankind. Liberals are superficial and dangerous because they ignore the profoundest political truth. They overestimate the sufficiency of reason and force in the creation and maintenance of social order. What they do not see is that man also needs myth.

Maistre presents his argument in a completely secular manner; it should appeal, he writes, even to those who mock the idea of God. Social stability requires, in addition to reason and force, an unquestioning belief that laws cannot be changed, that things cannot be other than they are. Maistre's aside that any belief that is socially useful must be considered "true" is not irrelevant in this context. Law must acquire the "character of sanctity and immutability." Destabilizing suspicions of arbitrariness will disappear if people are raised to believe that divine action has established the present order, that is, if they imbibe, like children, "the dogma of a divine legislator." When this natural reverence is effaced by the acids of skepticism, "all is lost."

Equally fallacious, according to Maistre, is the assumption that human freedom consists in being able to do what one wants, unimpeded by authorities or imposed rules. This view is based on an erroneous conception of human preferences. The fact is, individuals are terribly confused. They are all "weak and blind." Their will is not steady, but "wavering and irresolute." This has its roots in man's bifurcated nature: every individual is a small battlefield, and replicates inwardly the universal struggle between the forces of good and evil. As a consequence, man does not have stable or consistent preferences: "He does not know what he wants, he wants what he does not want, he does not want what he wants." That is a capsule summary of Maistrean psychology. There is no way that a distracted, befuddled, and passion-driven creature such as man can be called free simply because he is allowed to maximize his utility. He hasn't the remotest idea what his utility is.

Liberals naively expect peace. But the truth is that "there is nothing but violence in the universe." Particularly irk-

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some to Maistre was the sunniness of the liberal view of human nature, as if cruelty and viciousness had been left behind by progress. There is no hypothesis more thoroughly confirmed by experience than the ineradicability of original sin. Man was born evil and remains so: "*l'homme est mauvais, horriblement mauvais.*" Human beings certainly cannot be perfected by enlightenment and secular education. Just read the newspaper to discover what seemingly civilized people are capable of doing to each other.

The idea that skepticism poses an obscure but massive threat to society has remained a commonplace among antiliberals since Maistre's time. The fact that no one has ever met a dangerous skeptic does nothing to undermine this cliché. From Milton to Mill, liberals have welcomed public disagreement on the grounds that it makes a positive contribution toward the collective attainment of truth. One may argue who is more realistic here, the liberals or Maistre. But he certainly fears doubt more than they do. He certainly lacks their confidence that disagreement will yield agreement, that all disputes can eventually be resolved by rational means. It is almost as if he fears skepticism more because, ultimately, he is more of a skeptic himself.

At various points, Maistre suggests that republican governments are suitable for small countries during brief periods. In general, however, he claims that "all men are born for monarchy." It is ludicrous to assert that man is born free, while observing him everywhere in chains. History shows that man is destined to be a subject, born to live in a hierarchical society where political power is concentrated at the top. Unquestionable authority is just as indispensable to humanity as unexamined prejudice.

A king is the "center" of society, its linchpin, the source of its moral unity. Monarchy is also natural because an individual cannot make any important decisions on his own, because the individual is naturally defiant and must have his will disciplined by overwhelming force. The sovereign must be "infallible" in a purely practical and legal sense: no one can have the power to declare him mistaken. (In private, as Lebrun reveals, Maistre freely denounced the stupidity and the incompetence of real monarchs.)

What could be more absurd, Maistre asks, than a few scribblers gathering in a room and penning a document to regulate political life. The futility of such efforts is guaranteed by "the absolute nullity of human reason." A written constitution is nothing but a spider's web. You cannot govern behavior with ink. A true constitution is certainly not, in Paine's phrase, something you can put in your pocket, not a written document, but the basic structure of inherited customs, manners, and morals.

France's successive constitutional failures of the 1790s were grist to Maistre's mill. But he also had to deal with the American Constitution. He reasonably points out that, unlike its French counterpart, the American Constitution was not a total innovation. It was based on republican institutions and traditions imported from England, which had thrived in the colonial period when Americans learned to live without a king. But finally he thought that the American experiment with constitutional design, too, was bound to fail. Aware that "human power can create nothing," he sagely declares that no city called Washington, D.C., could possibly be built.

Man needs authority. But Maistre was very careful to couple this with: man needs community. In fact, individualism must be stifled in two ways. The *moi* must not only be disciplined by the sovereign; it must also be dissolved in the community. Maistre's reflections on self-erasure sometimes verge on the rhapsodic: "Man's . . . nascent reason . . . must lose itself in universal reason in order to transform its individual existence into a common existence. It will thus resemble a river that, flowing into the sea, still exists in the mass of water, but nameless and without separate reality." He resents liberalism not only because it mocks authority, but also because it thwarts this longing for total anonymity or (in some passages) for fusion with the nation.

This subjugation will, among its other benefits, release us from the painful contradictions of our inner life. In the *Soirées*, Maistre wonders what will become of the "I" if it succumbs to a desire to submerge itself into a "mysterious unity" with others. (This is a difficult question, he says, because it threatens the Christian belief in an immortal individual soul.) After the Last Judgment, evil, disagreement, and inner conflict will be suppressed. At that point, survivors will belong to an ideal community "where all inhabitants, penetrated by the same spirit, will fuse one with one another."

Liberals have an especially hard time explaining war. They imagine that individuals originally quit the state of nature to avoid mutual decimation. Yet it is only when we are in a social state that the genuine butchery begins. Wars kill more efficiently than atomistic muggers. So why, on liberal grounds, would men leave a state of disorganized (and therefore mild) war for a state of organized (and therefore more deadly) war? An antiliberal can say that man joins groups because he is a social animal, and that, realistically, the violent confrontation of rival groups is the most intense expression of man's inherent sociality. But what can a liberal say?

According to Maistre, "It is impossible to explain how war is humanly possible." As a result, non-religious writers have nothing to say on the subject. Despite the work of humanists and philosophes, "reasoning Europe" remains hopelessly addicted to warfare. That Enlightenment thinkers cannot deal intelligently with war is an utterly damning commentary. For human history is the history of war. The past is the story of all manner of bloody, cruel, destructive confrontation and enmity.

The idea of violent enmity, the notion that there is someone out there whom you must confront and kill, is a thoroughly innate and pre-rational idea. It acts through you, even without your understanding it: on the battlefield, a young soldier, otherwise perfectly gentle and civilized, will ignite and display an appalling "*enthusiasme du carnage.*" This, according to Maistre, is one of the most baffling enigmas of human history: man performs with relish what profoundly disgusts him. In the wink of an eye, a tender creature can become savagely bloodthirsty. Because Enlightenment thinkers try to associate art and science with peace, Maistre naturally stresses the contrary. He even claims, with only partial justification, that all great periods of cultural creativity have followed hideously cruel wars.

Similar thoughts surface in Maistre's famous discussion of the executioner. He indulges in a stomach-churning description of the executioner's work, with a blow-by-blow account of crackling bones, torn flesh, a mouth frothing with blood through which the victim begs for death, and so on. And he caps his gruesome narrative by remarking that the executioner gloats with pride in his craft. But the point, once again, is not that Maistre is some kind of sadist. He is trying, rather, to make squeamish readers face what he sees as an inexplicable paradox of human society. All political systems depend on the existence of a punitive power, but when we look at capital punishment directly it makes us sick to our stomachs. The executioner is "the horror and the bond of human community." This is shocking and mysterious. Liberals need punitive institutions as much as anyone; but they cannot even discuss physical punishment frankly. To

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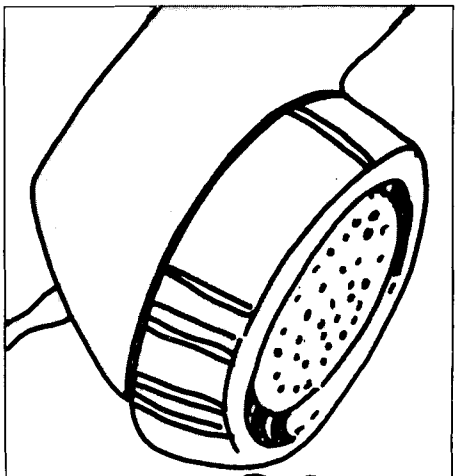

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reawaken a sense of the magic of society, Maistre dwelled obsessively on the incomprehensible. The rationalist tradition, he thought, assumed the total transparency or intelligibility of the world. It therefore robbed us of our sensitivity to the amazing realities that lay before our eyes.

Still, open-eyed realism is always the surface, never the core, of Maistre's thought. Burke, remember, denounced a gallows-centric theory of society, associating it with the Enlightenment. For Burke, saying that religion is the cement of society was denying that social order depends upon the hangman. For Maistre, astonishingly enough, the two claims are not at all contradictory. The executioner is the cornerstone of society because he is the last archaic priest presiding over mankind's last sacrificial altar.

This brings us to Maistre's central question. Why is there nothing more honorable on earth than the innocent shedding of innocent blood? To revere the martial virtues, after all, is to glorify the innocent shedding of innocent blood. Why does humanity do this? One seemingly Maistrean explanation for war (as well as for the executioner) is that man's heart seethes with black and demonic drives. Far from crying pathetically over injured canaries, man is a vicious beast, a born despot like "the child who suffocates a bird in his hand for the pleasure of seeing that there exists in the universe a creature weaker than himself." There is no reason to be surprised when man turns out to be a murdering animal. His tables are laden with corpses, he kills every living creature he encounters, sometimes for food and clothing, at other times merely for sport. And he also kills for killing's sake: "*il tue pour tuer*." And if man kills animals, who kills man? The answer is obvious: man himself.

But human brutality is a poor explanation for the self-inflicted calamities of a self-murdering species. Finally Maistre himself invokes nothing more precise than "an occult and terrible law that demands human blood," or a law of "the violent destruction of the human species." Such so-called "laws" merely summarize historical events. They are in no sense an explanation. God has simply implanted in our otherwise gentle souls an irresistible craving to shed innocent blood.

Maistre starts from the purportedly empirical premise that "no nation has ever doubted that the spilling of blood contains an expiatory power." All known cultures assume that the innocent alone can atone for the sins of the guilty. Hence all nations have practiced ritual sacrifice, particularly of weak and gentle creatures. The Terror of 1793-94 was merely another mise-en-scène of mankind's primordial belief in expiation through ritual bloodshed. That is what made the revolutionary tribunals so "interesting" from Maistre's point of view. Christianity made a sacrificial story into its central belief. The Crucifixion thus shows that Christianity is a religion deeply rooted in the natural human situation.

Sometimes Maistre describes the universe as disorderly and evil. At other times he depicts it as orderly and good. This utterly confusing back and forth stems from his simultaneous commitment to two traditions: gnosticism (or the belief that this world is hopelessly defiled) and Christian theodicy (or the belief that all worldly events, however painful from a human perspective, serve a higher good known to God). Maistre explicitly says the world is irredeemably corrupt. In the great cosmic battle between good and evil, evil has won. (It is this aspect of his thinking that places him well beyond ordinary class-based conservatism, and far outside of orthodox Christianity.) On the other hand, his providentialism implies total confidence in the cunning of reason, in the ultimate advantages to be reaped from all apparent evils.

Maistre's belief that the world is irredeemably evil partly explains his disdain for what he saw as the optimism of the Enlightenment. Yet Maistre himself repeatedly affirms the ultimate utility of all apparent evils. The Revolution scattered the French clergy throughout Europe, for example, relocating them in Protestant lands and thus preparing the way for a future reunification of Christendom. After periods of cultural contraction and sterility, when people are plunged into listlessness, a bloodbath can be rejuvenating. It will shock a civilization into life. Misfortune in general is useful because it reminds people of mortality and of God, and prevents them from becoming irreligiously attached to this world. In other words, "*tout est bien*" because "*tout est mal*"!

Commenting on Maistre, Isaiah Berlin observed that the "armory of weapons" he wielded "against liberalism . . . is the most effective ever assembled." But, Berlin concluded, his "positive doctrine is . . . unconvincing." This is an understatement. Maistre's description of the role of violence and cruelty in human history is accurate enough, but his account of the origins of gratuitous bloodshed, his whole theory of sacrifice, in fact, is obscure to the point of insanity.

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On a more prosaic level, he has a wildly exaggerated idea of the noxious political effects of skepticism. He overemphasizes the social need for a final decision-maker, and underestimates the importance of constitutional rules designed to make political decisions more thoughtful and intelligent. Logically, the colossal nature of his determinism is incompatible with any sort of political thinking, liberal or conservative.

Indeed, the most distressing implication of his thought is that there is no injustice in the world, only misfortune. (With his usual flair for inconsistency, he compares the execution of Louis XVI not only to a ritual sacrifice, but also to an accidental death caused by a falling tile.) He berates modern science for implying that the universe is not made for human beings, that man is but a speck of dust. But his protest on this point is insincere. There is nothing that pleased him more, in truth, than the sight of helpless mankind, a piece of straw, tossed about the storm winds of history.

After almost two centuries, Maistre's writings retain their allure. True, the satisfaction he feels when announcing the nullity of man makes one wonder about his mental health. And the enigmatic quality of his thinking is sometimes little more than a blend of obscurity and incoherence. But his relish of paradox lends a rare vividness to his best works. And his uncompromising hatred of liberalism provides reason enough to keep him in mind today.

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Wounds of War

BY JAY TOLSON

Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All by Allan Gurganus

(Knopf, 718 pp., $21.95)

Allan Gurganus is, if nothing else, a very gutsy writer. Although he comes somewhat late, at 42, to the publication of his first novel, one might still have expected him to bring forth a book in the usual fledgling mode—a first-person narrator compulsively exploring his sensibility against the backdrop of a narrowly circumscribed world. Not this first novel. Gurganus has instead taken on history, as it is lived and recalled by a cast of splendidly realized characters, not one of whom is obviously the author's alter ego. *Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All* not only defies the prevailing canons of minimalist taste, but proves that history is still a fit subject for serious fiction—no small accomplishments for a first time out.

For all that, is *Widow* a great novel? Not many other works of modern fiction have made me vacillate more over an answer. Despite its great conjuring power, the book has a disconcerting quality of lightness—the airiness of a vastly spun confection, a towering cotton candy of a fiction, lovely to look at, even delightful to the taste, but lacking a solid, nutritious center. Yet not even this verdict seems secure. For a certain airiness is essential to Gurganus's task, his taking on of that most insubstantial and elusive of chimeras, the record that we call history.

American history is Gurganus's subject, specifically the history of the South. Almost of necessity, therefore, he is concerned with the Civil War, the forces leading to it, the bloody fratricidal struggle itself, and the effect of the war on the subsequent contours of Southern society and life. He has addressed this with a cleverly conceived and imaginatively sustained narrative strategy—summed up in his title—which allows him to bring his considerable linguistic resources into play. And play is no small matter in a novel of this kind; history, after all, is grave and ponderous material, freighted with the inevitability of what we know to have been, or at least what we think we know. Gurganus's task is to encompass—or at least to contest—history's gravity with the playfulness of imagination, to balance inevitability with a sense of infinite possibility.

For the contemporary novelist, that challenge is greater than it was for his predecessors, for Stendhal, say, or Tolstoy. It is because our belief that there are "true," or relatively more accurate, accounts of the past has been seriously undercut by developments within the historical and philosophical trades, par-

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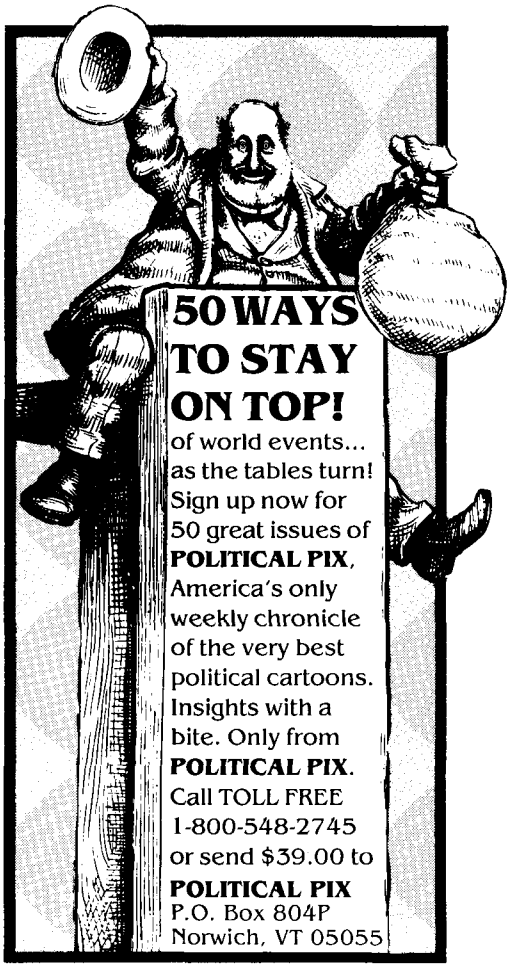

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ticularly since the deconstructionist and Foucaultian heterodoxies became the vogue in academe. Narrative history—one of the novel's closest cousins—has suffered a particularly hard fate during this century's methodological quarrels. Even before the rise of deconstruction, social historians and other quantifiers found narrative history too full of fluff and nonsense to merit serious consideration. But the deconstructors tried to deal it the death blow. Singling out narrative as a particularly odious form of intellectual bad faith, they charged that it was a highly rhetorical mode of discourse that disguised the subjective (and inevitably elitist) interests of its authors.

Fortunately, many talented historians have returned to narrative (some never abandoned it); but the brief spasm of doubt has had its lingering effects on the broader culture, which includes novelists. In Gurganus's case, the problematics of writing about the past figure into his story and into the telling of it. The constructed and highly dubious character of all historical accounts is exemplified most obviously in the figure of his narrator, and in her own sly comments on the unreliability of her stories—her tendency, as she puts it, "to embroider on the decent muslin truth."

Lucy Marsden—a source of light within the dark den of war, as her name implies—is verging on her 100th birthday in the fictive present of the novel. We meet her in an old-age home in her native town, Falls, North Carolina, chirpily relating the story of her life to a young female reporter. Her years alone would license her to play fast and loose with the details of her stories, but their reliability is still further compromised by the fact that many of them come by way of her husband, a Civil War veteran, who, with Ned Smythe, his best childhood friend, marched off under the Stars and Bars at the ripe age of 13.

Like many a veteran, Lucy relates, William More Marsden never got over his war years. But the great wound of his life was not physical, despite the knee-shattering Yankee bullet that almost cost him his leg. Marsden's great wound was the loss of Ned, his angel-voiced companion, shot midair on a riverside rope-swing during what all thought was a tacit cease-fire.

> Their first lieutenant had to pull men off that sniper, then men tried to peel my naked little husband off the dead friend he kept propping up and holding on to. Willie kept pressing wet curls back from his buddy's forehead. Kept telling Ned which girls in Falls just couldn't live through news of this, which choir director couldn't.

Most of all, Willie couldn't. Returned to Falls, he faced the further horror of having to tell about the war, again and again, to Ned's bereaved mother Winona, the town's eccentric and resident intellectual (a redundancy, of course, in the small-town South). The telling of these tales may have been painful, but it is, Gurganus variously suggests, Will's best hope of gaining possible release from the horror.

It was Willie's vulnerability, Lucy tells us, that drew her decades later to the "Captain," a desire to protect and to nurture the deep core of tenderness that she first glimpsed in her husband-to-be's eyes shortly before she, a mere child of 15, stepped up to the altar with him. Lucy vainly believed that she could recover the boy in the good ol' boy. Not surprisingly, though, the winter-spring marriage that ensued—the captain was 50 when the knot was tied—proved to be more a frustration than a fulfillment of Lucy's desire. It began, for one, with a honeymoon that seemed nothing more than licensed rape. No fast fading flower, though, Lucy endured, partly with the help of her husband's former maid and one-time slave, Castalia Marsden, a feisty, independent soul who nurtures fantasies of a distant claim to African nobility. The two of them get by largely by telling stories to each other.

Salvation through narration is, of course, a universal consolation, but in few other cultures is it so desperately needed as in the American South. The reason is simple, brutal, and terrible: the South, despite its mannered and mannerly surface, remains a tormented culture. So tormented, really, that the only good thing about the dismal business of living there—that is, for anybody who values a modicum of sanity, and, strangely enough, there are many people who don't—is the rather perverse joy of telling about it.

The torment stems partly from climate and mainly from history (the two being at many points related). Air-conditioning has to some extent alleviated the curse of climate, but repeated reconstructions have done little to heal the wound of history. It scabs over, but it never heals. Its name is slavery, of course, both the historical fact and the enduring legacy. For the black and white descendants of those who lived by or under the peculiar institution, the memory is a fact of everyday life. It is not just racism, horrible enough as that is. It is something more visceral than a mere cultivated dislike based on skin color. It is physical, even sexual. The memory of slavery is charged with the sentiment of violation and the threat of violence. It is there, on both sides, almost palpable, every time a white passes a black on a street. And the only true miracle, as Walker Percy, among other forthright Southerners, has observed, is how seldom the violence comes to the surface.

Slavery, to be sure, was not unique to America, but nothing mitigates the fact that its existence violated the ethos of the young American nation. We are only beginning to see, in works of recent scholarship, the extent to which white Southerners were troubled by the fateful contradiction at the center of their lives. But the gravity of economics, habit, sheer animal laziness won out. White Southerners rationalized. They turned a blind eye on their own abomination. And they ended up having hell to pay.

Almost as remarkable as their rationalization, though, is the inability of most Americans today, Northerners and Southerners, to grasp what Abraham Lincoln expressed so clearly in his great Second Inaugural Address: that slavery was a sin so grave that America may never atone for it. Lincoln told his countrymen that the destruction of the nation through war would not, if it came to that, be excessive expiation. He meant the whole nation, because the North, in his eyes, was almost as guilty as the South, and he himself as guilty as any other white American. The Union war effort was only partial atonement. But on the South's contaminated ground, the process of atonement is, at best, only beginning.

How to atone? A preachy answer would be an embarrassment. Reparations and social programs have limited worth; and for anyone with eyes to see, they often weaken the very people they are intended to help. More to the point, such programmatic measures let the individual, the bearer of the sin, too easily off the hook. Gurganus's book is remarkable for offering an imaginative answer to the question of how the individual may begin to atone. First, Gurganus suggests, recognize how profoundly slavery saturates the soil and the souls of a people. Then make this recognition part of your awareness of the rest of the world, and particularly of the suffering that flows inevitably from the sins of the past. The acknowledgment of "suffering as a constant," as the Fall's grammar school teacher Miss "Witch" Beale noted on one of Lucy's history themes, is "the beginning of this child's compassion." Of all people's, Gurganus implies.

He never says this, of course. His novel

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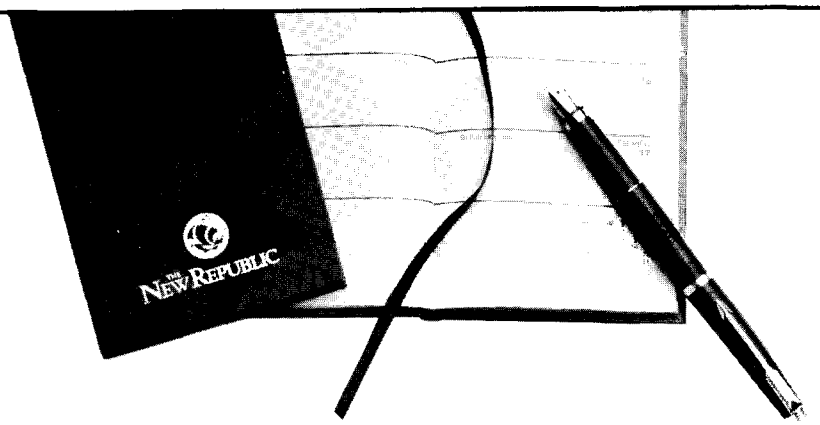
wouldn't be a work of the imagination if he did. But the book forms a meditation on the American Fall—that is, on its Falls (as the name of his fictional town makes clear), because each generation must experience its own. Gurganus makes us mindful of this theme through his use of the Bible and through his attentiveness to its deep ties to the culture he writes about. The Bible, and particularly the Old Testament, provide the deep music of the novel, both obviously, in biblical quotations opening chapters, and more subtly, through language and narrative technique. Castalia's vision of salvation, for example, merges biblical imagery with runaway slave lore:

> The North, I talking. My linking Canaan is shining there, map-upwards of this South, cross the River of Jordan and the Mason of Dixon. For freedom, I bout overdue. New York City, the new place Reba seen dancing—pure and perfeck welcome—in she ugly head. I hear it's got rivers on all sides, bound to make my river kin feel most welcomed in. City's streets (some passing runaways done tolt me) is just strewed with beaten gold, roads running full of coconut milk, guttered with free honey. Lady? In my Auntie's house be many mansions.

The stories within the novel are often carefully wrought parables, which, like those of the Bible, force the reader to interpret himself in order to arrive at their meaning. This biblical presence is the most forceful reminder of the novel's underlying themes—the vanity and the forgetfulness of mankind, particularly its vain denial that the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the sons (and daughters), yea unto generations.

If the primal sin of Gurganus's fictive world is the violation of other people, the next worst sin is forgetting. Will Marsden becomes forgetful, despite what he learned from Winona Smythe, and as a result one of his nine children ends up being accidentally blinded—indeed, the one who is named after his long-lost friend Ned. And what about the institutions most directly charged with reminding people of what they should not forget? What about the churches? For Gurganus, they have abdicated their responsibilities for more worldly concerns: "Episcopalians thought that liquor was just a digestive aid. They thought good genes were the equal of good works. They thought the Godhead had stationery with a list of charter members engraved on it. They believed God was a club." Much of what fires Gurganus's indignation, clearly, is the failure of Christians to heed the message of their central text.

Why find fault, then, with a book that takes on so much so well? It seems a little



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churlish. Yet, curiously, the book seems to call itself into question. It challenges its own biblical vision of human error with a more characteristically American, utopian vision of the ways of man and the world. It does so most obviously in its treatment of its main subject, the Civil War, and war in general.

The problem is largely one of the author's sensibility, which I would describe as Whitmanian or, to put it more bluntly, gay. Such a sensibility is centrally informed by a blockage of sexual love between men and women, and by the hope of such love between men and men—or women and women. Gurganus brings this sensibility to bear on the making of his characters; and though some readers may be disturbed by the undercurrent of homosexual love between Ned and Will, as well as between Lucy and Castalia, Gurganus's depiction of the forces that attract and bind his characters are for the most part convincing, if a bit tendentious. The drama of desires is powerful.

But this is also a historical novel, and to write a book about history is to make propositions about it, propositions spun not only from facts and theories but also from feelings and personal experience. This is where a difficulty arises. The historical novelist must be respectful of limits. He must be able to determine where sensibility cannot explain, to know where the larger forces of historical fate and destiny cannot be comprehended by a single set of feelings and desires (cannot because history is the expression, or working out, of so many wills and so many desires). To impose too much of one's own sensibility on history is finally to trivialize it.

Gurganus is not ignorant of what brought on the Civil War. Much of his novel deals with these larger causes. But he presses too far a sort of Whitmanian thesis—that war results from man's fear of being fully himself, and from his fear of closeness with fellow men. It is a paradox, much elaborated on in the novel, that men at war enjoy a closeness that they can enjoy nowhere else: great tenderness develops among men engaged in killing other men. Away from women and under the constant threat of death, they can admit to their loneliness and forge a closeness with other men that defies the understanding of those who have never been to war. But the great tragedy, Gurganus suggests, is that such tenderness and honesty between men cannot survive away from the trenches. Back home, the usual estrangements of everyday life return.

Such a vision is not without merit, and Gurganus makes it powerfully felt. But it is rash and mistaken to elevate the emotional experience of war into an explanation of its cause. And this, I think, is precisely what Gurganus does. He confuses psycho-sexual politics with politics, proposing, through imaginative implication, that war is the extension of sexual politics by other means. (Deep in his heart, Will Marsden blames Lucy—and all women—for the death of Ned; and when he becomes senile, he literally attacks Lucy for this reason.) This may have a Norman O. Brownish neatness to it, but it is also vacuously reductive. War is deadly rational. The reasons behind going to war vary infinitely (and often include a psycho-sexual component); but most wars have been fought for the most calculated of reasons. Of few wars was this more true than the Civil War. The reasons were noble and base; economic, moral, and political. The suggestion that they were largely psychological is a grotesque misapprehension.

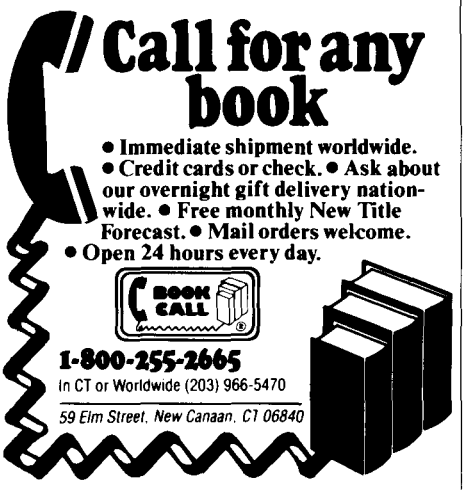
Still, the psycho-sexual explanation does hold for one aspect of the Civil War. It sheds revealing light on the rationale for fighting put forward by many Southerners—the argument from honor. Listen to Robert E. Lee, just days before the South's secession: "I wish to live under no other government & there is no sacrifice I am not ready to make for the preservation of the Union save that of honor." Inextricably connected with notions of family, chivalry, and personal pride, honor meant many things; and as a code of the white community, it also had its dark side. It depended on violence, or at least the threat of violence. It glorified white womanhood and exaggerated women's vulnerability to the sexual cravings of black men. And it underlay the rituals of everyday life—the gaming, gambling, drinking, and other activities, often violent and self-destructive, pursued by men who, at bottom, lived dreadfully isolated lives, alone on their farms surrounded by people who were denied all freedom and therefore possessed of every good reason to rise up and kill their masters.

Gurganus offers, I believe, an effective fictional dissection of Southern honor, nowhere more chillingly than in what Lucy calls the "last of [Will's] better tales." It is set on a plantation in Virginia, where Will's unit was briefly bivouacked, and it focuses on the bizarrely tortured relationship that develops between Unison Randolph, the daughter of the plantation owner, and a dashing officer, Lieutenant Prothero, a Charlestonian of the right sort of family.

Prothero appears on a "magnificent bay," wobbling under "gear enough to equip a minor traveling circus." Foremost among his paraphernalia is a huge, three-panel mirror, before which he nightly sits, surrounded by candles as he primps and preens. The troops think him more than strange; they find him scary. For the dandy is no coward. He is fearless when he leads charges, riding far in front of his men, screaming like some unheard-of creature.

Strangest of all, though, is his courtship of Unison, a mad parody of a courtship that includes public humiliation and a forced entry into her room. To give away the end of this tale would be to ruin one of the pleasures of the novel; suffice it to say that Gurganus's macabre, Poe-like play with all the familiar furnishings of Southern romance is terrifying—an amazing literary achievement. It shows how elaborately death-dealing this society built on lies and denials can be. Yet Gurganus clearly loves what he so ruthlessly depicts, and it is the loving attention to details that makes the episode so harrowing.

Even when Gurganus comes close to trivializing some of his themes, what he says and shows is troubling. It is because his view of war's causes draws so deeply on a resilient American myth—on the myth of the American Adam, a creature at once natural and fully realized, at peace with the world and with his neighbors. We recurrently think that self-fulfillment, a body vibrantly electric, will bring happiness and peace to the world.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The myth has both liberal and conservative variants in the American political and cultural arenas: do your own thing in the 1960s, *enrichissez vous* in the 1980s. History keeps disproving the myth, and demonstrating its danger. As Gurganus's novel shows, however, the myth does not die.

JAY TOLSON is the editor of the *Wilson Quarterly*.

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 2*

et missiles are less imposing than they've been cracked up to be.) It's nice to see Petrov's solicitude for the state of Soviet technology—post-cold war peace and friendship with a vengeance, I take it. In any event, it used to be argued that inaccurate missiles had the virtue of being no good for a first strike, but that Soviet "modernization" would prove their aggressive intent, i.e., their first-strike capability. Now Petrov puts it the other way round. By Petrov's reasoning, perhaps President Bush should offer the Soviets help with their accuracy. Lend-lease, anyone?

TODD GITLIN
Berkeley, California

Sergei Petrov replies:
Mr. Gitlin is an optimist, because he seems to believe that nobody would use a nuclear weapon that is inaccurate and unreliable. If Soviet missiles are as inaccurate and unreliable as John le Carré suggests, then that is very bad news, because the only way to compensate for the inaccuracy and the unreliability of nuclear weapons is by an increase in their number and in their crude power to destroy, which is precisely how deterrence in the early years of the nuclear era was achieved.

In the dark

To the editors:
Lawrence Malkin's statement "The retina can detach from the eye socket" has filled me with despair and malaise ("A Tale of Two Eyes," September 4). As an ophthalmologist, every day I try to enlighten patients about various eye conditions. That sentence reveals how dreadfully I fall short. Despite two laser treatments, Malkin does not know where the retina is, nor to what it is attached. The eye socket is the space, surrounded by the bones of the orbit, in which the eyeball rests. The retina is a thin lining of neural tissue on the inner portion of the eyeball. A retinal detachment is the separation of the retina from the underlying layer of cells called the retinal pigment epithelium (RPE). A detachment "from the eye socket" is physically impossible.

TIM PIEH
Willmar, Minnesota

To the editors:
For Lawrence Malkin it was obviously the best of times and the worst of times. While it may be obvious to some that $1,300 is too high a price for his laser treatment, it is just as obvious that $75 is ridiculously underpriced. The cost of his treatment in France was much greater than $75, but it was covered by the French taxpayers, who also had to cover the cost of his totally unnecessary hospital stay. I do not doubt that Malkin's laser treatment was worth much more to him than a half-day stay at a French hotel. Similarly, cataract surgery to a 91-year-old, dying Alzheimer's patient may not be worth the $2,000 that is routinely charged, though you never know. That should be his decision to make. And that's the point. As the governments of Poland, Hungary and the Soviet Union are now learning, it is virtually impossible for state bureaucracies to fix prices for anything. Bureaucrats cannot recognize value. As long as governments attempt to fix prices, severe economic inefficiencies will result. When the individual patient must take greater responsibility for the cost of his medical treatment, then prices will move closer to their true value.

WAYNE B. BEYER
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Up in smoke

To the editors:
I am frequently forced to endure the noxious, disease-causing emissions of smokers in the rear of a plane (Notebook, October 2). The fact that these "fools" may suffer the agonies of nicotine withdrawal unless they are allowed to inflict more serious suffering on their innocent neighbors is regrettable, but I don't see how that vests them with any special rights.

RALPH T. TROY
Wilmington, North Carolina

To the editors:
In its effort to purify airplane passengers along with the air, Congress is trying to remove one of the few privileges remaining to travelers. Alas, no longer will nonsmokers be able to select the smoking section to distance themselves from squalling infants and their hyperactive siblings.

COLIN G. JAMESON
Key West, Florida

TRB *continued from page 4*

great relief to both of them that they didn't have to administer the injections themselves. And it's unlikely either would have had the guts to do so. What made the inflation cure possible was elected officials' ability to blame the Fed for the pain while taking credit for the cure themselves.

In the past decade, the American political system has become much more self-indulgent and shortsighted than it was in 1979. Reagan and Bush have taught the country to believe that no short-term sacrifice, however small, is necessary for any long-term benefit, however large. It is laughable to suppose that the President and Congress, who are now busy cooking up yet another tax cut in the face of a $140 billion deficit, could be trusted with the power to create a short-term rush of prosperity anytime they wanted, at the cost of future inflation and decay.

The Republican Party has had it every which way on the question of Fed independence. The party's 1980 platform, at a time when inflation was public enemy No. 1, sternly declared: "The independence of the Federal Reserve Board must be preserved." By 1984 the inflation threat was past—thanks to the Fed's independence—but the party was still taking heat for the 1981-82 recession. "The Federal Reserve Board's destabilizing actions must stop," declared the 1984 platform, which also called for more "coordination between fiscal and monetary policy"—code for accommodating Reagan's huge deficits by printing more money.

In 1988 the Republican platform merely said blandly: "To keep markets on an even keel, we urge objective Federal Reserve policies to achieve long-run price stability." If this means anything at all, it is a veiled reference to something like a gold standard. But you can be sure that the next time such an objective guide to monetary policy produced a bit of a squeeze, politicians of both parties would be complaining again about "destabilizing actions."

The cleverness of the present Fed arrangement is that it allows politicians to complain about monetary discipline without being able to stop it. That is a great advantage, not just for the good of the country but for the politicians themselves. No wonder Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady has said he'd just as soon not have a vote on the Fed, thanks all the same. That is also the Fed's greatest defect, from a democratic point of view: not so much that unelected officials make the key decisions, but that elected officials don't have to take responsibility for the consequences. Still, who'd want to give these guys that kind of responsibility?

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Talking dirty

THERE IS A NATIONAL OBSESsion with garbage. On top of stiff recycling laws in the District of Columbia comes a new national magazine pugnaciously calling itself *Garbage*. The first issue is a runaway success. The publishers originally hoped to sell about 50,000 copies nationwide; they already claim to have 80,000 subscriptions. *Garbage*'s target readers are the "soft greens": environmentally conscious folk who don't want to change the world, just clean it up a bit—the sort of people who would rather read an article like "Garbage At The Grocery" or "In the Dumpster" than overthrow the government.

AS A DINNER-TABLE TOPIC IN Washington, garbage is up there with mobile missiles. People who once recited statistics about the throw-weight of a Trident D5 now talk another sort of trash. They'll tell you that Americans produce 3.96 pounds of garbage per person per day—way more than a modern Roman, who produces 1.52 pounds, or somebody from Kano, Nigeria, who produces 1.01 pounds. Your garbage buff loves garbage trivia. For example, Americans throw away 1.6 billion ball point pens a year, two billion razor blades, and 246.9 million car tires. Only 11 percent of the hundreds of millions of tons of trash produced each year is recycled. Hard-core soft greens know they should read the *Los Angeles Times*, because 83 percent of it is printed on recycled paper, and boycott the *Washington Post*, because none of it is printed on recycled paper. They know this because they read it in *Garbage*.

REALLY, EVERYBODY'S TALKING dirty these days. President Bush says he drinks carrot juice because "it's sweet and it doesn't have any of that stuff they spray on apples." Cooper Evans, the president's special assistant on agriculture, says the way to persuade Americans that their food supply is safe from pesticides and tampering is "to say it over and over for a number of years." And then there are the garbage books. Have you read *Complete Trash: The Best Way to Get Rid of Practically Everything Around the House*? No? What about *How to Shit In the Woods: An Environmentally Sound Approach To A Lost Art*? This is no spoof, says the reviewer for *Garbage*, but a helpful 77-page guide explaining "how to do it with dignity and environmental awareness." Good throne reading—and the paper it's printed on can be recycled on the spot.

BUT WHERE IS THE GARBAGE preoccupation leading us? Almost everyone, until now, has been a victim of the "institutional truth" about garbage. As defined by John Kenneth Galbraith, the institutional truth is that which "serves the needs and purposes of the large and socially pervasive institutions" (in Washington, Wall Street, or wherever). Until now, when "Harry" was asked by "Martha" to take out the garbage, it was a one-way trip from the back door to the sidewalk. From there it was the concern of the City Council, the Mafia, or whatever institution. There was no question in either Martha's or Harry's mind of the potential value of garbage. Why should there have been in the Great Throwaway Society? Nor, until now, has there been any desire to understand and control garbage. But taming the Wild Things in garbage has great promise. Instead of burying waste hurriedly in land fills, disused salt mines, or an ocean trench, the sensible and creative disposal of garbage could present coming generations with the promise of reconstructing American cultural norms. Martha will no longer have to yell at Harry. Taking out the garbage will not be a chore, but rather a fulfilling, all-male event, akin to cleaning the car, watching football, or going to the pub. Keeping up with the Joneses on the latest in garbage disposal will become the main concern of socially mobile males on the block. I can see the day when garbage could replace the Russians as America's overriding mania. Garbage does, after all, stand astride the generations—and everybody has some.

THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER ATtempt to analyze the national speed. The latest *Psychology Today* assesses the pace of life in 36 American cities. Researchers made the astonishing discovery that people in the East of the nation walk faster, talk faster, and are more nervous about the minutes ticking away than people who live in the West. In Massachusetts, for example, pedestrians walked 60 feet in an average of 11.1 seconds, or 3.6 seconds faster than they do in California. More people in the East tend to wear watches than in the West. And clocks show the correct time more often in the East than in the West. Of course, as a dyed-in-the-wool East Coast elitist, I knew this already. In my experience, clocks in Los Angeles are frequently three full hours behind the correct time.

JONAS SAVIMBI, THE ANGOLAN guerrilla leader, gave his usual masterful performance at the National Press Club during his most recent visit here. He said his "freedom fighters" were happy with the cash ($50 million, or twice as much as President Bush first offered the Hungarians) that they have been collecting covertly from the CIA, and he is ready, after talking to Bush, to seek peace with the Marxist government in Luanda. The message was lapped up by an adoring audience. Savimbi, by the way, tried to persuade the president that evidence collected by his guerrilla organization, UNITA, and analyzed by scientists in Europe, proves that the Luanda government has used Soviet-supplied chemical weapons against his rebels. "I don't know if to disclose that [Luanda] is using chemical weapons will complicate relations between the Soviet Union and the United States. I think some political constraint is avoiding people from talking about that," he suggested darkly after his meeting with Bush. Savimbi's problem is not that the Bush Administration would have difficulty crying foul about chemical agents if they had been used, but that he employed as his European chemical weapons expert a Belgian toxicologist by the name of Professor Aubin Heyndrickx. This is the man the Reagan Administration used to help "prove" that the Soviet-supplied Vietnamese were spraying Laos and Cambodia with "yellow rain," an alleged poison gas that deposited tiny yellow spots on leaves. Professor Heyndrickx analyzed several of these yellow spots, declared that indeed they contained potentially fatal substances made by fungi, and became a vigorous promoter of the Administration's case, even though scientists questioned his analysis. Well, sometime later Professor Matthew Meselson of Harvard unraveled the mystery of the yellow spots and showed they weren't chemical agents at all, but the feces of wild honey bees. It was all a dreadful embarrassment for the Pentagon and the State Department. As a result, in the chemical weapons business, former enthusiasts of the yellow rain hypothesis are now suspect. Little wonder that the Bush Administration officials tried to steer Savimbi off his charges by politely saying his evidence is inconclusive. Someone should do the definitive piece on this . . . maybe I'll query the editors of *Garbage*.

PETER PRINGLE

Peter Pringle is U.S. editor of the London *Independent*.

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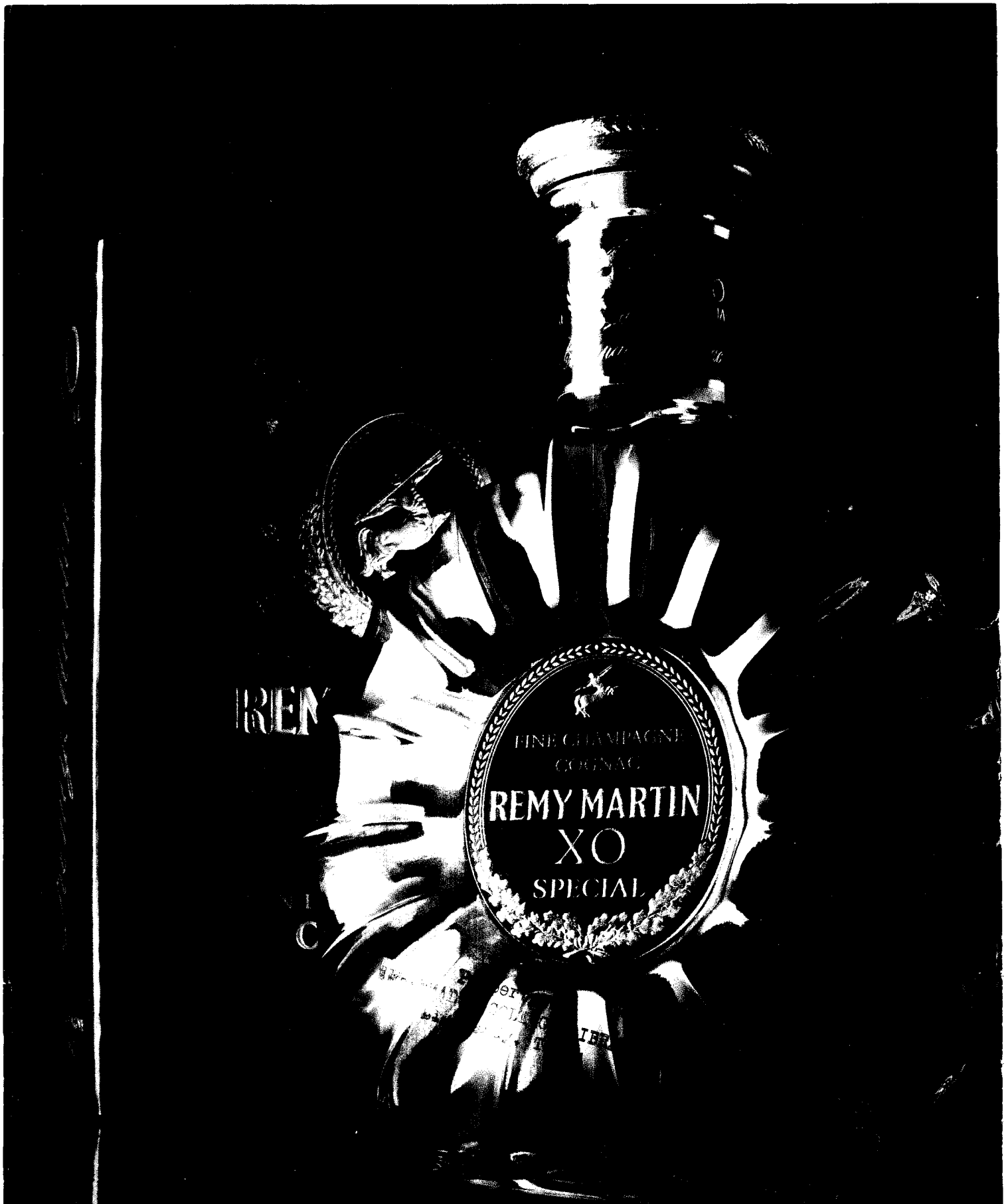

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